ELVIRA;

OR,

THE WORLD AS IT GOES.

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A NOVEL.

DEDICATED TO MRS. SAWBRIDGE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF SEMPRONIA.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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ELVIRA:

OR,

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CHAP. IX.

SINCE the time of Madame de Maintenon no Italian comedians had performed at Paris. That favourite taking offence at their repreſentation of a piece, entitled *La fauſſe Prude*, which ſhe conſidered as a perſonal ſarcaſm, carried her reſentment ſo far as to prevail upon the king to baniſh them his dominions. Frequent applications had been ſince made from the court of Verſailles, during the ſucceeding, and at the commencement of the late reign;

but this politic nation could never be prevailed on to riſk their genius among a people who had ſo meanly eſtimated its value.

The National Aſſembly exciting the curioſity of a traveller, tickets for admiſſion were procured, and the Colonel accompanied his family there at an early hour. The order of the day regarded aſſignats. As the difficulty in procuring caſh for one of fifty livres frequently prevented buyer and ſeller from ſtriking a bargain; and the general murmur was ſuch, that government could no longer diſregard the various appeals which had been made upon this grievance. Monſieur Clement Tonnerre was the orator who moſt diſtinguiſhed himſelf on this queſtion, by propoſing a diviſion of the aſſignat of fifty livres, when caſh would be readily obtained for any ſum under twenty-five. The plaudits of the gallery were ſo violent, that the preſident rang his bell: but his ringing had no more effect upon the audience, than Glandower's threats of calling ſpirits from the

the deep had upon Hotſpur. However, the acclamations were ſo unanimous, that no doubt could ariſe of a majority upon this popular motion. The Colonel had not been returned an hour, when he was ſurpriſed by the appearance of a large body of the national guard, riding furiouſly through the ſtreet, and threw open the window to enquire the cauſe? to which he was anſwered by a woman, with great ſerenity of countenance—*On va ſeulement pendre, Monſieur Clement Tonnerre.* A more ſtriking inſtance of the inconſtancy and volatility of this people cannot well be given.

Patriotic notes were ſhortly after iſſued out, negotiable to the frontiers. Alſo local notes, as low as *vingt ſous*, ten-pence, within their own diſtricts: but they extended no farther—a tolerable proof of national credit. The noble edifices and public buildings in this part of France have been too well and too frequently deſcribed to be mentioned here: but Verſailles was no longer the Verſailles which

had been the wonder and admiration of almoſt every nation upon the globe. It now ſtood a melancholy monument of earthly grandeur! Its poſſeſſors fallen from the moſt elevated rank into a dreadful captivity; deprived of the common comforts of life, without a friend to ſooth their diſtreſs, or a fellow-creature to adminiſter a ray of conſolation.

Reflecting on the horrid deed ſo lately attempted in the very apartment in which we now ſtood; heightened by the awful gloom which ſtole through the high-arched caſements, and the dreadful deſcription of the ſad ſcene by a meagre Swiſs guard that night upon duty, ſo forcibly impreſſed the imagination, that it was not poſſible long to loſe ſight of the image he had raiſed.

To conſider the ſums of money expended on this edifice, which in many parts is now falling to decay; that it has been the reſidence but of two ſucceſſive monarchs, and is now expoſed to the ravage and deſtruction of a brutal populace; that

that things and perſons of no moment ſhould give ſuch powerful revolutions to the progreſs of the greateſt, ſeems a providential diſpoſition to baffle and abate the pride of human ſufficiency. The want of marble in this vaſt ſtructure may be one cauſe of its preſent ruinous condition; which is ſaid to be leſs than in the dwelling houſe of a private Genoeſe. The caſtle alone is mentioned,—as the numerous ſtatues in the walks, &c. contain a large quantity.

Lewis the Fourteenth, in the meridian of his greatneſs, purchaſed from Rome the principal antiques ſtill remaining in the gallery. Pouſſin, that illuſtrious painter, was employed by his majeſty to convey them into France. The Pope, apprehenſive of the conſequences of a refuſal, gave his conſent; but in order to prevent an inſurrection of the people, had them ſecretly embarked by night. Had Lewis exerted the authority he then poſſeſſed, ſuch was the dread entertained of his ambition, through all the papal dominions, that it is

not to be ſuppoſed but the civil magiſtrates would have immediately complied.

The gardens of Verſailles cannot afford any new idea. But when we conſider a ſpot ſo unfavourable to beauty, Le Notre muſt have poſſeſſed a fine genius, which could have formed ſuch an unſightly heath into a beautiful area. But that genius was too ſubſervient to the taſte of the nation, to have given a fair diſplay of its own noble conceptions of artificial ſcenery. A luxuriant avenue of trees, in a ſolitary waſte, is ſuch an unpleaſing contraſt, as cannot be reconciled with the intended beauty of deſign. The regularity of the whole juſtly applies to Pope's obſervation:—

"No pleaſing intricacies intervene,
"No artful wildneſs to perplex the ſcene;
"Grove nods at grove, each alley has its brother,
"And half the platform juſt reflects the other."

St. Cloud preſents a very different ſubject, poſſeſſing every natural advantage from ſituation and variety of proſpect. It received,

received, from the ſame hand all thoſe graceful improvements which its ſuperior capability ſo well afforded. The caſcade is certainly a fine object, but wholly out of nature. Even the deception of Chatſworth's is better managed, though not ſo well ſupplied. That of St. Cloud riſes in height one hundred and fifty yards above the other, which for a ſhort continuance has evidently the beſt effect.

We ſaw the chateau, as it had been recently inhabited by the royal family. It is furniſhed in a ſtile highly elegant, but by no means ſplendid. The paintings in the gallery, and thoſe of the principal apartments, are by Pouſſin, Le Brun, and Cipriani. A bacchanalian, by A. Brun, highly eſteemed by judges of the art;—and the ſeaſons, by Cipriani, executed in his very beſt ſtile. Many of the portraits were unintereſting, from our ignorance of the originals, as well as many an allegorical ſubject, from an inattention to the juſtneſs of compoſition.

The bronze work is executed with a neatneſs and delicacy, far ſurpaſſing any thing of the kind. It is here the ornamental part of the whole furniture, and admits of a happy diſplay of taſte in the different objects introduced. But we were ſurpriſed to ſee the Imperial creſt in ſuch apartments, where that of France would have been more in character. The chateau was purchaſed of the Duke of Orleans for her majeſty's ſummer reſidence: but the property became her's, by French money. This circumſtance, trifling or otherwiſe in itſelf, had been much canvaſſed by the enemies of the court, long before any change in government took place, and tended to make the queen more obnoxious to the people than any former inadvertency. It was conſidered as a public demonſtration of contempt, and as ſuch influenced every little paſſion and low prejudice, not only againſt her majeſty, but her principal favourites, who had been ſuppoſed her adviſers in this circumſtance.

The

The Gobelin tapeſtry far ſurpaſſed our expectation; in which the ſpirit, animation, and lively expreſſion of the human figure approaches nearer to life than in moſt paintings of the preſent day, or indeed, in many of the ancient maſters. The variety and exquiſite delicacy of tint, muſt require an uncommon attention and care in the dye of the worſteds, with the moſt accurate eye, in order to preſerve the juſt and regular gradation of the clara obſcura. Mr. Bell, under whoſe management this royal manufactory then was, ſhewed us the method of working, what is called *la haute et baſſe liſte*. The tints for a brunette are no leſs than ſeventy in number; of a blonde, ſixty-two; and all other parts of the figure in proportion. The ſcarlet is unuſually vivid, without that glaring tinge which generally prevails. This colour is prepared from a rivulet, within a mile of the manufactory. Other waters have been tried; but in this occult quality are ſo inferior, that the dye thus prepared has

not been fit for uſe, even in the coarſer parts of the drapery.

Having ſeen every thing worth attention, the Raymonds began to wiſh themſelves in England. Two months had been ſpent in Paris; and many of their acquaintance being gone, they found the ſociety of Sir Charles and his lady, in a domeſtic converſation, rather too irkſome for long continuance. Their friendly motives in this excurſion had ſo far ſucceeded, that they were fully convinced the new connection would infallibly injure their young friend; and they had no doubt of meeting with a ready compliance for her departure at the ſame time. Sir Charles had long ſince ſuſpected there was a myſtery yet to be unravelled, with regard to his wife's family, and thought it not a little extraordinary, that a woman, with ſuch reſpectable connections, ſhould neither know, nor be known to any one. He gently hinted this to the Colonel, who ſeconded the motion with great alacrity, and adviſed ſending for St. Pierre, and queſtioning

queſtioning him upon the ſubject.—But here Sir Charles prudently pauſed, to aſk himſelf what advantage he ſhould gain by the enquiry, but that of making his folly ſtill more conſpicuous? For he began to dwell ſeriouſly upon his age and infirmities; and was confident, that to neither of theſe had he been indebted for conqueſt.—What could have been the prevailing charm, unleſs his money? At the cloſe of the laſt emphatic ſentence, he determined on ſetting out immediately for Luſignan Hall, taking Elvira to his old hoſpitable roof—ſettling a decent maintenance upon his wife, provided that ſhe remained in her own country; and after finding an eligible match for his niece, ſpend the remainder of his days in penitence and prayer. Haſtening to execute this extenſive plan, he caught, by accident, his figure in the glaſs.—"Age and infirmities!" apoſtrophized the Baronet, with a grin of conſcious ſatisfaction; "where are they to be found? Not in my face, for that is roſy as the morn; nor in my legs, for they

are plump as a chairman's; my eye, lively, briſk, ſparkling! my movements, light and airy," attempting a demi chaſſé. Veſtris had been long endeavouring to teach him all the arts of graceful attitude; but a certain inflexibility of ſenſes bid defiance to the genius of his elegant maſter. However, at this moment the modeſt Baronet was fully ſatisfied with his improvements. The point, therefore, being ſettled, as to any other influence than perſonal attraction, he blamed himſelf for the injuſtice he had done his lady, and was now fully reſolved never more to enquire into her family, or any prior acquaintance.

When Elvira firſt ſaw her uncle, after a ſeparation of more than two years, ſhe was ſurpriſed at the alteration ſo apparent in his looks. His complexion was naturally pale; and his features ſharp and pointed: while his legs were uſed to be ſo thin, that, without the aſſiſtance of three pair of ſtockings, they might have been taken for ſkeletons. This obſervation ſhe had made, with real pleaſure, to her friends, conſidering the change as a certain proof

of

of the benefit he had derived from a warm climate. Mrs. Raymond would not damp the ſatisfaction Elvira expreſſed though his fluſhed countenance and ſudden increaſe of fleſh, at ſo advanced an age, were to her a certain indication of an approaching apoplexy; and from the following circumſtance no other could be expected.

A few days previous to the Raymonds departure, the Colonel having occaſion to ſpeak to Sir Charles, went to his dreſſing room for that purpoſe, and knocking at the door, which ſtood half open, walked in at the ſame time. He was ſtanding up puffing and blowing moſt violently; his ſervant behind him, pulling with all his might a thick rope, and to all appearance round his maſter's throat. The Colonel verily thought the fellow was ſtrangling him, and bade him inſtantly deſiſt. When the old beau, turning round, laughing heartily at his friend's apprehenſions, "Why," ſaid he, as ſoon as he could draw breath, "all this is only meant to make me look jolly. See what a colour I have!

I have!' Pure nature! Ha! ha! ha! He was only fitting my new wig cloſe to my head, by a rope inſtead of a ſtrap and buckle." His legs underwent the ſame diſcipline, by bandages and cuſhions, in order to give projection to the calf.

With many other ſingularities, oſtentation went hand in hand with its uſual concomitant meanneſs. He never rode out without a ſet of horſes, and four grooms; and a vis-a-vis had juſt been launched with his lady; but when St. Pierre, or any other humble friend dined with him, he ſeldom failed mixing the bottle intended for their uſe with a due proportion of water, though the wine as ſeldom exceeded low Burgundy, at ten ſous (five-pence) a bottle. No one entertained with more profuſion than the Baronet: his table was ſplendid, and ſolid at the ſame time. His dreſs (as much of it as was ſeen), the moſt expenſive to be procured; while his chemiſe was made of cloth fourteen pence a yard, with cambric riſbands and point ruffles. When he diſcharged his tradespeople's

people's bills, he compounded for his caſt-off clothes, and has been often heard to wiſh, on returning from a noble dinner, that he could follow the wiſe cuſtom of the Janizaries, in exacting teeth-money for the honour he had done his hoſt in wearing out his, by eating of ſuch a variety of proviſions.

When the Raymonds ſignified their intention of leaving Paris, they requeſted Elvira's return; to which Sir Charles readily conſented, propoſing in the following ſpring to return to Luſignan Hall, and have his lady preſented.

Elvira was very deſirous that her uncle ſhould be made acquainted with Lord Beauclaire's propoſals. His affection to the ſound of a lord was poſſibly the warmeſt ſenſation he experienced, and an alliance with one of the Earl of Seſton's illuſtrious deſcent, likely to receive the moſt flattering approbation. His own anceſtors, the Luſignans, of whoſe importance he was ſo tenacious, were inferior in hereditary honours, which had been tranſmitted from

from father to ſon, for the laſt four centuries. The Colonel kept this detachment as a corps de reſerve, to reinforce his arguments, ſhould it be wanting. The ſubject was no ſooner introduced, than the Baronet's briſk eye acquired additional luſtre, from a Lord Viſcount's propoſals of marriage to Sir Charles Luſignan's niece, Miſs Mordaunt. In ecſtaſy he repeated, "a Lord Viſcount, nephew to Sir Charles Luſignan! Sir Charles Luſignan uncle!"

"Yes, uncle, to a Lord Viſcount."

"'Twill do, Colonel; 'Twill do.—I have no one objection: and his name?"

"Beauclaire! ſon of the Earl of Sefton."

"Let's ſend for Elvira, without loſs of time; and gladden her heart with my approbation. Brother I ſhall then become to an Earl and a Counteſs——; ſiſter to Sir Charles Luſignan."

Though no friend was more anxious for this alliance than the Colonel, yet it was an affair of too much importance to be hurried on by the mere impulſe of animal ſpirits. The Baronet's real intentions towards

wards Elvira, were in the firſt inſtance to be fully aſcertained; and how to accompliſh this, required no little dexterity. But Sir Charles had one prominent feature in his character, by which he was readily known.—Inſtant deciſion! This was favourable to the preſent purpoſe. Intoxicated by the vapours his ambition had raiſed, the Colonel was not for delaying buſineſs till the fumes evaporated; but inſtantly informed him, that the Earl had been made acquainted with his liberal intentions towards his niece, by acknowledging that lady as his heir.

"My heir!" exclaimed Sir Charles; "I did ſo when I was a bachelor; but matrimony has altered the queſtion. I do not doubt having a ſon of my own, who will not only inherit my property, but tranſmit the name of Luſignan to many generations."

"Well, but Sir Charles, ſuppoſing that event not to take place, you will ſtick cloſe to your promiſe, with reſpect to Elvira?"

"Sir,"

"Sir," replied he, "a diſappointment in the lineal branch is ſo improbable, that I may accede to your propoſal without heſitation."

"Admitting," ſaid the Colonel, "the impoſſibility, or improbability, which you pleaſe, you may ſo entail your eſtates, that they cannot be inherited but by a Luſignan. The eldeſt ſon of a peer ſucceeds of courſe to his father's title, but that of Luſignan may be annexed; indeed, inſerted as a preliminary in the marriage, that Lord Viſcount Beauclaire, or the Earl of Sefton, which ever he may then be (for the latter is, and has long been in bad health), ſhall bear with his own, the name of Luſignan, upon his marriage with Miſs Mordaunt."

The Colonel had worked his friend's imagination to that happy fervour, that a lawyer was immediately ſent for; and he contrived to keep it in full glow till Monſieur le Droit arrived. By degrees he came to the point—got ten thouſand pounds ſecured to her, in the preſent inſtance, as a tribute

a tribute of paternal affection; and in default of iſſue, a full ratification of the previous engagement.—The ſame being legally prepared, the Colonel determined on removing her the following day from the dangerous preſence of her aunt. For the delicacy and tenderneſs of Elvira's feelings expoſed her to the moſt harſh conſtructions, from the oppoſite diſpoſitions ſhe had to encounter. This woman judged of Elvira's principles from ſuch as influenced her own conduct; repreſenting her to Sir Charles, even in Mrs. Raymond's preſence, as *artificieuſe, quidée par l'amour propre*, and the like. Abſence ſecured her from further danger, as far as perſonal endearments were miſinterpreted. Mrs. Raymond's affection to her amiable friend could barely reſtrain her from expreſſing the indignation ſhe felt at ſuch baſe and cruel inſinuations. Lady Luſignan did not want diſcernment in diſcovering Mrs. Raymond's ſentiments of her real character; and to feel that her neglect aroſe from the mean opinion ſhe entertained

tained of her capacity in doing Elvira either future ſervice or prejudice.

Calling thus her ſufficiency in queſtion, gave an inclination, and where this is there never wants ſtrength or opportunity to annoy. Though Mrs. Raymond was, in fact, the immediate object of her reſentment, it would anſwer little purpoſe ſhewing it there. She therefore took a more effectual aim, and vented all her acrimony againſt an innocent object. There is no invention ſo weak that cannot make, or aggravate ſome ſtory to villify his enemy; and many of our heavieſt misfortunes ariſe from perſons and things that ſeem of little conſequence. Into what tragical extravagances does Shakeſpeare hurry Othello, upon the loſs of a handkerchief; and what barbarities does Deſdemona ſuffer from a ſlight inadvertency in regard to this fatal trifle?

An anecdote of this ſort had lately happened at Sir Charles's. A French officer, who viſited the Colonel, had committed the moſt unfortunate miſtake, where he meant

meant a compliment: he was the beſt diſpoſed man in the world—but ſingularly abſent. His taſte was literature, but his profeſſion demanded a little gallantry; and when he appeared the petit maître, it was ſure to be at the expence of his underſtanding. Sitting by Lady Luſignan, in a deep reverie, forgetting he was then actually in converſation with her, ſhe happened to draw off her glove, and her hand accidentally caught his eye:—"*Ah! la belle main,*" exclaimed Monſieur Sans Penſer, without thinking what he was ſaying.

"*Vous vous moquez,*" replied her Ladyſhip, with a ſmile, flattered by the compliment, it being ſtrikingly ugly; *je n'en connois point,* (continued ſhe); *d'auſſi laide.*"

"*Vous vous trompez,* Madame," he replied, ſtill abſent; "*J'en connois bien plus mal faites.*"

"*Je vous defie,*" ſaid her Ladyſhip, "*de me les montrer.*"

What poſſeſſed him at that moment defies all imagination. But taking hold of the

the other, "*En voila une, Madame, pour le moins auſſi laide que l'autre.*"

The laſt words had no ſooner eſcaped his lips, than recollecting his error, he endeavoured to apologiſe, but all to no purpoſe. The Chevalier, in this embarraſſment, applied to Miſs Mordaunt, to aſſure her Ladyſhip, "*qu'il étoit au deſeſpoir de ce que la diſtraction l'avoit fait commettre.*" This he ſaid in a low voice, which Lady Luſignan interpreted as a "*parti pris,*" *par Mademoiſelle et Monſieur de l'inſulter.* The Colonel interpoſed, and Sir Charles explained; but ſhe was inexorable. This inſignificant circumſtance, added to Mrs. Raymond's expreſſive looks, were fully ſufficient for her purpoſe. But her diſſimulation remained, *in petto*, till the party left Paris.

The Colonel had taken no ſmall pains to find out who Mademoiſelle Fourberie was; he had alſo riſked ſeveral hints to herſelf, and employed Sans Penſer to try the effects of his eloquence. But ſhe courageouſly defended herſelf againſt every attack, and

and the party would moſt likely have left France ignorant of her *chers parens*, but for an impromptu on the evening preceding their departure. They were entering the box, engaged in the name of Le Chevalier Luſignan, when a national guard, who was ſtanding at the door as her Ladyſhip paſſed, recollecting her face, exclaimed, with rapture, as at the ſight of an old acquaintance—"*Ah! ma chere tante que je l'embroſſe*;" which he inſtantly accompliſhed with great vehemence, to the no ſmall aſtoniſhment of the whole party. She endeavoured to walk on; but he inſiſted upon accompanying her. Sir Charles, whoſe ſurpriſe was heightened by his indignation, held up his cane, in a menacing poſture; but his new relation replied, with calmneſs and contempt, "*Petit drole, retenez votre baton.—Ariſtocrat que vous etes, je ne ſuis pas moins, votre nepheu.... Voila une belle recompenſe, pour un voyage de cinquante lieurs fait exprès de vous rendre mes hommages.*" The Colonel apprehending a ſerious diſpute, adviſed Sir Charles to ſay no

no more, nor yet refuſe his coming into the box. This artful woman finding herſelf diſcovered, now attempted by obſequious manners to compound for "*le petit derangement*," we had experienced. The converſation between the aunt and nephew let the party into her full hiſtory; and to avoid the tragical effects of a parting ſcene, we haſtened away before the family were riſen.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

THOUGH St. Germains was out of the direct road, the Colonel wiſhed to give the ladies a peep at it; as alſo the chateau, (as it happened to be there), where King James the Second ſpent the remainder of his days. The ſituation of this town is certainly a very fine one; the walks well kept, and ſhaded by a noble plantation of trees. The river Seine, which a very popular writer ſpeaks of as *Salle et Bourbeuſe*, ſtruck us from the clearneſs and beautiful colour of its water: but this different effect might probably have ariſen from the different ſeaſons in which we travelled. It is here in width nearly what the Severn is about two miles below the iron bridge in Shropſhire. It runs in a ſerpentine di-

rection; and the many ſmall iſlands which peep through its ſurface are in ſuch lively vegetation, that they reſemble little parterres: its banks riſe gradually from the edge of the river, and the intermixture of paſture land and vineyards, which lie immediately behind it, produce a pleaſing variety. But the ſcenery is wholly pictureſque; it does not produce the bold and ſublime objects, which in Shropſhire contributed ſo much to the dignity of the Severn. The caſtle is ſtill entire; moſtly inhabited by the *petite nobleſſe*, through the intereſt of a favourite miniſter, or favourite miſtreſs. We remained here a few days, in order to pay our compliments to ſome families, with whom we made acquaintance at Paris. But the aſcent to to their reſpective apartments was equal to ſcaling a rampart.

On the fourth and fifth ſtories Counteſſes and Baroneſſes were to be found out of number: but the proſpect from this eminence fully repaid our trouble. It was indeed, enchanting beyond deſcription and

and made us almoſt a convert to the beautiful in preference to the ſublime, as both in nature, as well as art, it conveys more intereſting ſenſations, and leaves the ſpectator at eaſe for the full enjoyment of what his genius beſt comprehends.

This town is uncommonly neat for a French one; the ſtreets wide and commodious: but few carriages are to be ſeen there, a ſedan being more convenient than any other mode of conveyance. Hotels are to be hired at a low price, and furniſhed by the tapiſſier for any ſhort time you pleaſe. The Duc de Breteuil has a fine houſe and garden at the entrance from Paris; and the latter is free for the higher ranks, in which tête-à-tête parties ſeemed to go on with much harmony and ſatisfaction. Very few Engliſh reſide at preſent at St. Germains; and it wants public amuſement; for a conſtant routine of card-playing ſoon becomes tireſome, when purſued as a *dernier reſort*.

We ſtopped according to our promiſe to pay a viſit to Donna Rodrigue, and moſt

rection; and the many ſmall iſlands which peep through its ſurface are in ſuch lively vegetation, that they reſemble little parterres: its banks riſe gradually from the edge of the river, and the intermixture of paſture land and vineyards, which lie immediately behind it, produce a pleaſing variety. But the ſcenery is wholly pictureſque; it does not produce the bold and ſublime objects, which in Shropſhire contributed ſo much to the dignity of the Severn. The caſtle is ſtill entire; moſtly inhabited by the *petite nobleſſe*, through the intereſt of a favourite miniſter, or favourite miſtreſs. We remained here a few days, in order to pay our compliments to ſome families, with whom we made acquaintance at Paris. But the aſcent to to their reſpective apartments was equal to ſcaling a rampart.

On the fourth and fifth ſtories Counteſſes and Baroneſſes were to be found out of number: but the proſpect from this eminence fully repaid our trouble. It was, indeed, enchanting beyond deſcription, and

and made us almoſt a convert to the beautiful in preference to the ſublime, as both in nature, as well as art, it conveys more intereſting ſenſations, and leaves the ſpectator at eaſe for the full enjoyment of what his genius beſt comprehends.

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agreeably were we ſurpriſed at the change we perceived. Her ſpirits had reſumed a degree of cheerfulneſs, and her mind was perfectly compoſed: ſhe preſſed us ſo affectionately to paſs a few days with her, that her invitation was not to be declined.

Shortly after our arrival a gentleman entered the room, whom ſhe begged to introduce.—" *C'eſt,*" ſaid ſhe, " *le veritable Chevalier de Balle, et le miracle ne s'en meloit pas.*" He was a fine young man, about twenty-five, with a martial air, and a noble intereſting countenance. Our aſtoniſhment was ſo evident, that he certainly thought we took him for an impoſtor. To remove our incredulity he gave us his ſtory as follows, previouſly aſſuring us he was not the Chevalier—*dont on avoit tranchè la tête.*

" That the two perſons employed to ſeize and murder him, having acquainted the maître d'hotel with their buſineſs, and by whom employed to perpetrate the atrocious deed, prevailed on him, as they thought, to favour their deſign. Monſieur G. re-

G. retired under pretext of ſecuring his gueſt, when he informed him of the order he had juſt received. That to eſcape, or appeaſe a grandee's jealous revenge, were equally impoſſible, and adviſed him to prepare for his fate. The Chevalier briefly related the injuries he had received, and offered Monſieur G. a conſiderable ſum if he would be inſtrumental in preſerving his life; when a thought inſtantly occurred, which made him inſtantly ſet off in all haſte to the priſon of H——. The gaoler was his own father, on whom he prevailed to concur in a propoſal which he thought conſiſtent with juſtice, viz. of ſubſtituting a malefactor then under ſentence of death for murder and other crimes, in the place of an innocent man, who muſt otherwiſe be ſacrificed to the ſavage fury of Don Rodrigue. With this requeſt the gaoler found no reaſonable objection in complying, and the affair ended as before related."

The Chevalier then returned to France with all poſſible expedition; made many fruitleſs applications for an appeal from Verſailles to the Court of Madrid; but the parliament of Paris would not interfere with the Spaniſh government: it was not a national concern, and conſequently not within their juriſdiction.

The dreadful ſuſpenſe under which he laboured, he expreſſed with a warmth and honeſt affection, which drew tears from us all; and concluded by ſaying, a reconciliation having taken place between the Marquis and himſelf, at the requeſt of the former, in his dying moments, a connection with the family was by this means renewed, from which he received intelligence of Henriette's return to France, but by what means he knew not, being in England when the joyful information arrived. This event delayed for near a fortnight that period, when he was reſtored to all that was dear to him. Hymen had conſecrated their vows by thoſe endearing ties, which

which no earthly power ſhould ever more diſſolve.

Their intended viſit to England was a circumſtance which gave us additional pleaſure, as we ſhould be able to continue an acquaintance where misfortune had ſo intereſted our regard.

We ſhortly took leave, and proceeded on our journey. This had produced more variety than we expected; but, like moſt of the journeyings through life, evil rather than good had been found to prevail.

CHAP. XI.

THE Colonel wrote immediately to Sir Charles Beauclaire, acquainting him with Lord G.'s conſent, and the arrangements which had taken place in his affairs; but before the ſhip ſailed with the grateful intelligence, letters arrived from his Lordſhip, ſpeaking of his return in the autumn as certain. Elvira's honeſt joy cannot be a matter of doubt, yet ſuch was the delicacy of her feelings, that Beauclaire's name never eſcaped her lips, but in tête-à-têtes with Mrs. Raymond; but they enabled her to ſuſtain the ſtrongeſt conflicts, without apparent emotion: though I have long been of opinion, that violent impulſes of joy more frequently ariſe from want of feeling, than poſſeſſing it to any ſuperior degree.

Shakeſpear

Shakeſpear ſays, "Silence is the perfecteſt herald of joy: I were little happy, if I could ſay how much."

Though this may be no new thought in our dramatic friend, yet, as all his obſervations on the various movements and conditions of the human heart are ſo perfectly juſt, we are not diſpleaſed whenever we happen to find our own ſentiments ſupported by ſo excellent an authority.

Mr. Sydney was early in welcoming the arrival of his friends: but when he addreſſed Elvira, it was with a reſerve that could not eſcape her obſervation. Mrs. Raymond alſo remarked it; but imputed it to a very different cauſe.—Elvira immediately adverted to the Paradoxes, and was apprehenſive they might have engaged Mr. Sydney in ſome unpleaſant adventure, which, as relations of her's, he took the firſt occaſion of implying in his preſent demeanour. Mrs. Raymond, a more experienced obſerver, attributed it to a ſubject Elvira little ſuſpected: a ſtrong propenſity

on his part had been very manifeſt, and the Colonel well knowing the candour and ſincerity of his character, informed him, ſeriouſly as he thought, that her affections were engaged. But whether abſence had enfeebled his memory, or paſſion rendered it uſeleſs, it is certain that at this moment he was deeply involved.

It has been obſerved by a writer, who tolerably well knew the force of the paſſions by practical knowledge, that one frequently in love cannot be ſuſceptible of a ſerious attachment. But this maxim is ſurely falſe: in promiſcuous connections the heart is in no wiſe concerned.—Its affections are neither relaxed by indulgence, nor yet animated by ſympathy: and it requires no great effort to trace a ſpeculative lover to the age of forty, inſenſible of any appeal to the conſtancy of his nature. Though Mr. Sydney's attention to the ſex had given him the reputation of gallantry, yet no man living ſo little deſerved it: his manners were ſuch as

as never failed to pleaſe; but that pleaſure aroſe more from reſpect to his worth, than from any compliment to the party addreſſed; ſo that eſteem was ever joined to admiration; and his honourable conduct was ſuch, as made his acquaintance conſidered a valuable acquiſition to all who ſhared it. With a warm heart and lively affections, he now firſt turned his ſerious thoughts to matrimony: all former arguments he regarded as futile, founded on erroneous principles. Elvira, though now but in her eighteenth year, united to her great vivacity a ſolidity of character congenial with his own. To her external attractions he was by no means indifferent; but he contemplated ſuch charms *en philoſophe*, ſubject to the caprice of time and the inconſtancy of adulation. But theſe reflections were made when Elvira was in the bloom of youth and beauty, too lovely to admit the poſſibility of either; and till abſence brought his philoſophy to the teſt, mind ſeemed his only object. Mrs. Ray-

mond could not obſerve this impreſſion without real concern: the rapid progreſs of his affection, unknown poſſibly to himſelf—to remark it to him, after what the Colonel had ſaid, was not to be done, as the ſlighteſt hint that could be given would be ſure to convey a reproof; yet, to ſee an amiable man fall a ſacrifice to hopeleſs paſſion, without warning him of his danger, Mrs. Raymond conſidered as a breach of integrity, as well as friendſhip.

Elvira was gone to ſpend a few days with her friend Lady Hartley, ſo that her abſence afforded a favourable opportunity for introducing Sir Charles's marriage, preparatory to his conſent for her's. From Sydney's ſurpriſe it was evident that a prior knowledge of this circumſtance had never ſeriouſly recurred to his remembrance. The violent perturbation which immediately ſucceeded, was a manifeſt proof, that by this fatal intelligence he felt his hopes at once deſtroyed.

Admitting

Admitting Elvira's affections to be diſengaged, yet, from the great diſproportion of years, there could be no probability of ſucceſs.—But ſuch an obſtacle never once preſented.—It was a firſt attachment, tenderly warm, yet impetuous and uncontrouled. Though modeſt and diffident of his merits, and poſſibly the only one who undervalued their worth, yet an unguarded confidence had here excited the moſt ſanguine expectation. Every exalted pleaſure, which ſprings from mutual refinement of paſſion, fled from him like a dream; but as a dream that had left the moſt awful impreſſion.

In his retired moments ſhe was ſtill preſent, more lively than ever.—Thoſe innocent graces which firſt played about his heart, were now heightened by the dignity of her air and figure. Againſt ſuch powerful appeals, reaſon appeared a weak advocate; but his ſteady integrity enabled him boldly to withſtand every effort that hope could make to flatter his diſtreſs. Honour forbade him ſeeing Elvira more, unleſs he

he could ſee her the wife of a friend. In his preſent condition of mind, that was not poſſible.—To reſiſt grief, he felt himſelf equal; but to contend with conflicting paſſions, in the preſence of the beloved object, virtue diſclaimed.

Some days had elapſed ſince the beforementioned information had been communicated, ſince when he had not called on the Colonel as uſual. The latter judging nearly the ſtate of his mind, ſtaid away till his ſpirits could more eaſily bear the ſociety of a friend. On the Colonel's firſt viſit, he was very low, which determined his ſtaying dinner, in order to apply his diſcourſe, &c. as the party ſhould be beſt diſpoſed to receive it. The Colonel was the moſt comfortable friend that ever fell to the lot of affliction; for the goodneſs of his heart and judgment, added to the facility of his temper, ſympathiſed with the ſufferer, while he left him not the unreſtrained flow of his private feelings. Sydney's ſpirits revived by ſuch humane compaſſion, and, after ſome explanations, which he owed to himſelf,

himſelf, as well as to the ſincerity of his friend, promiſed to do his utmoſt in conquering a paſſion, which it would now be criminal to indulge. That he ſhould immediately leave town, nor return till he became ſuch as to entitle him to the Colonel's eſteem.—Here they parted

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

LADY Hartley brought back her young friend after an abſence of a few days, and then ſat out for Kelſborough.

Mr. Shallow, after a retirement of ſome months, made his appearance once more in the faſhionable world. His manners were apparently improved, or he had found it to his intereſt they ſhould appear ſo. He ſeldom ſpoke, and, when he did, the gravity and ſolemnity of his addreſs rather excited mirth than reſpect. A baſhful modeſty had taken place of that ſelf-confidence of ſpeech and behaviour which formerly diſtinguiſhed him. Cautious in his opinions; diffident of his judgement—with a reſignation and deference to every one, and ſuch a condeſcending forbearance as to yield implicit approbation to all the

the follies and abſurdities of his companions; with a palliative ever ready for inadvertency and error; and philanthropy, in the moſt extenſive view, ſucceeded to defamation and ſlander.

Such was Mr. Shallow as he now preſented himſelf. By ſtrangers his good conduct was not yet ſuſpected; nor yet his reformation among his acquaintance. Whether the whole of his plan may be conſidered as an act of the will, or only ſelf-denial, he was too guarded to betray.

His viſits at the Colonel's were not frequent; but his aſſiduous attention to Mrs. Raymond and Elvira did not paſs unnoticed. His intended propoſals had never been mentioned ſince the melancholy affair at Kelſborough; and as the report of a prior marriage was not known under better authority than Lord Hartley, it was hardly fair to give credit to it upon ſuch an evidence; for though Elvira had received the ſame intelligence from Lord Beauclaire, ſhe was not at liberty to devulge it. After viſiting near two months

at

at the Colonel's, with an invariable regard to the unities, Shallow began to think himſelf ſecure in Mrs. Raymond's good opinion, and that, from perſonal merit, ſhe would now employ her influence with Miſs Mordaunt.

Armed for conqueſt, he ſallied forth one morning to Berkeley Square. After diſplaying all the pride of humility, and extolling the high merits of Miſs Mordaunt, preſumed to flatter himſelf Mrs. Raymond would condeſcend "to permit him the honour of----------" Here his baſhfulneſs interpoſed, with a long pauſe—but his auditor, not being the leaſt diſpoſed to relieve it, retired back into her chair, patiently waiting the concluſion of the ſentence——"of addreſſing her."

Mrs. Raymond replied, Miſs Mordaunt's affections were engaged, ſo that no application upon that ſubject was to be made, and, that having been informed Mr. Shallow was already married, ſuch a propoſal did not a little ſurpriſe her.

Shallow,

Shallow, all aſtoniſhment, aſſured Mrs. Raymond, as ſoon as he recovered the power of ſpeech, "it was a cruel aſperſion; that a mere affaire du cœur was all the attachment he ever had, and that had long ſince been diſſolved."

Mrs. Raymond begged to diſpenſe him from every explanation; but he alſo begged to defend himſelf, and to repeat that he was injured in the tendereſt part; his honour wounded poſſibly beyond redemption; and deſired to be informed to whom he was indebted for the barbarous aſperſion. Mrs. Raymond replied, her authority was the late Lord Hartley.

"To yourſelf, Madam?"

"No!—to Miſs Mordaunt."

He obſerved, that reſpect to that lady withheld him from a requeſt which could not but recal many a painful recollection. Mrs. Raymond aſſured him, that lady had too high a regard for truth to be influenced by any private feelings, and was riſing to ring the bell, when Shallow recovered himſelf ſo far, as to ſay the teſtimony

mony of the late Lord Hartley was entitled to no weight—conſcious of his innocence that was ſufficient. Weak as he was, he was not ſo very dull as to expoſe himſelf to the ſame imputation from the perſon to whoſe affections he aſpired, ſo that here the matter would have dropped but for an accident which explained the motives of his conduct.

There is a ſort of littleneſs in the minds of men of wrong ſenſe, which makes them more inſupportable than downright fools, when you ſee them bear, not only with patience but a good grace, an open attack upon their honour, rather than acknowledge the mortification of their vanity.

Shallow had not, by nature, the leaſt propenſity to ſtrike into what had not been ſaid every day of his life; but with a total inability of ſpeaking on any thing uncommon, and this affaire du cœur (his pretext with Mrs. Raymond) was no other than a marriage he had contracted, ſome years ago, with a Mademoiſelle de la Bagatelle,

gatelle, whoſe love of admiration happening to ſurvive her conſtancy to Shallow, ſhe had taken advantage of his abode in England for diſſolving each party from the cares of conjugal incumbrances. This was no extraordinary event, though he no doubt thought it ſuch; and had he but related the fact, ſuch as it was, all that could have been ſaid would have amounted to no more, than that his attractions were neither ſo powerful, nor yet ſo laſting, as he had flattered himſelf. The accidental manner in which the above came to light was in conſequence of the arrival of the French officer, Monſieur Sans Penſer, who, meeting Shallow at the Colonel's immediately as the divorce had taken place, mentioned it in converſation at his table.

It appeared from the Chevalier, that Shallow had given his French acquaintance to underſtand he was conſidered as a bel eſprit in his own country, alſo a tolerable proficient in the ſciences. The Chevalier did not think his friend averſe

to

to a gaſconade; but ſtill inferred, from the modeſty with which he introduced his talents, that he certainly poſſeſſed them.

Mrs. Seymour, being a few nights after joined at Ranelagh by the Colonel and the diſcarded époux, was joking the latter upon his gravity, and after many ſevere ſtrokes, which ſhe ſo well knew how to apply, obſerved that he had loſt all his fire ſince he laſt croſſed the Straits, and, different from all other young men, had wholly renounced La Bagatelle.

At this laſt remark Shallow looked all confuſion, and, in a half-broken ſentence, which was near loſing its way through a tremulous voice, begged to know how and where ſhe could have heard of it?

"Heard of what?" ſaid Mrs. Seymour.

"About La Bagatelle?"

A queſtion apparently ſo ſilly, being wholly unacquainted with the ſubject of his inquiry, induced her to add, a little ironically, that he had not only left his heart but his underſtanding behind him. Now any other mortal man would have perceived

perceived that "no more was meant" than what really "met the ear;" but diſcernment not being Shallow's forte, haſtily replied. The former, he begged to aſſure her, was ſtill in his poſſeſſion, but voluntarily acknowledged he was now divorced from Mademoiſelle de la Bagatelle; though how this affair had reached the knowledge of his Engliſh acquaintance, he was not wholly at a loſs to gueſs.——Mrs. Seymour, not being his confeſſor, applied for a further éclairciſſement to her friend the Colonel; and a ſtory thus communicated was too ludicrous for concealment.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIII.

MRS. Raymond and Elvira were preparing to leave town, when news arrived of the ſudden death of Sir Charles Luſignan. The intelligence was brought to the Colonel by the Baronet's ſteward, with a letter from the widow, or rather under her authority, written in Engliſh, which had been ſent expreſs from Dover on the preceding day. The ſame was very conciſe, mentioning only the death, with orders from the widow for punctuality in her quarterly remittances.

The Colonel was not leſs aſtoniſhed than Mr. Faithful at what he read. No mention of Elvira; nor yet directions as to the arrangement, &c. of his affairs. But his death being ſudden, in a foreign country, ſurrounded by people who knew little

little of Engliſh cuſtoms, ſuch a total remiſſneſs would have been readily accounted for, had orders for the regular payment of her income been alſo omitted.

The Colonel began to view the matter in a very ſerious light, and very naturally apprehended that ſome miſchievous influence had induced the Old Man to alter his will. The ſubject was too important to admit of delay; but the Colonel being obliged to ſet out for Portſmouth on the following day, where he might be delayed for ſome time, it was not in his power to go over to France, and who to depute he was entirely at a loſs. To ſend the ſteward alone would not anſwer the purpoſe; and as the poſt he held in the family was one of high reſponſibility, and himſelf a very reſpectable man, to keep up as well as to give him importance, a proper choice as to the perſon who accompanied him was not to be diſregarded. There were many whom the Colonel could officially employ; but the language was the obſtacle. To be converſant in it ſo as to tranſact buſineſs,

ſineſs, particularly when the incomprehenſible faculties of the party are conſidered, required one not readily found.

On further reflection, he recollected a Mr. Bryan who had been formerly in the profeſſion of the law. He was now in France, and reſided, as the Colonel thought, in or near Poiſſey, a ſhort diſtance from Paris. This man was quick, ſhrewd, equal to the height and depth of her Ladyſhip's integrity, and carried with theſe talents a commanding air, which was ſure to give them weight.

The Colonel remained in his library diſpatching ſome buſineſs, and was writing to Mr. Bryan, when a ſervant came in, to acquaint his maſter that Mr. Sydney was at the door, and would alight if he were diſengaged. The Colonel haſtened out to meet his friend.—After the firſt interview, Mr. Sydney converſed with much eaſe and cheerfulneſs; but ſeeing letters upon the table yet unfiniſhed, deſired the Colonel in the firſt place to diſpatch his buſineſs.

It occurred to him that Sydney knew Mr. Bryan's addreſs. Much as he wiſhed to avoid every thing which ſhould lead to Elvira, this information was ſo eſſentially neceſſary, and a few hours being all that remained, that he determined on riſking the inquiry. The habits of intimacy between theſe two friends naturally led the Colonel to ſay, ſuch and ſuch is the buſineſs:—but the caution his honeſt countenance betrayed, induced Sydney to put the queſtion.

The Colonel replied, "to tranſact a little buſineſs for him at Paris; but as you tell me his preſent abode is at Tours, that is impoſſible."

Sydney ſaid, "if the buſineſs is of a nature not to require much brains, he could recommend a young man now in Paris, but, from his ſkill, or addreſs, nothing was to be expected. Simple matter of fact was his talent."

This was begging the queſtion, though in the handſomeſt manner, ſolely from a wiſh to ſerve him. The honeſt Colonel

frankly told him the ſubject, and his apprehenſions reſpecting their young friend.

"And why, my good Colonel, could you heſitate a moment in employing me? Did I not tell you on parting, you would never ſee me till I became ſuch as entitled me to your eſteem?"

Though this offer did not ſurpriſe the Colonel, who ſo well knew the worth of Sydney's character; yet to expoſe a mind, prompted by ſuch laudable motives, but ſtill bleeding under the wounds it had received, to a ſituation ſure to recal in the livelieſt ſenſe every wretched remembrance, was a reflection to which humanity could not yield. The Colonel, rather by ſilence than ſpeech, endeavoured to expreſs what he felt; but aſſured him the offer was ſuch as he muſt decline.—Sydney's ſanguine temper was not to be reſiſted, and the Colonel, with heart-felt reluctance, was urged to comply.

On the following morning the latter ſat out for Portſmouth, and a few hours after Mr. Sydney for Dover, attended by Faithful.

ful. They had a quick paſſage, and reached Paris on the ſecond day. Mr. Sydney wrote a note to Lady Luſignan, acquainting her with the ſteward's arrival, accompanied by a friend of Colonel Raymond's, requeſting an interview the earlieſt hour ſhe would do them the honour to appoint.

To this requeſt a verbal anſwer was returned, that her Ladyſhip "au deſeſpoir de la perte de milor, n'étoit pas viſible." Mr. Sydney was prepared for a like anſwer, and politely ſent inquiries for ſeveral days; but "mi lady, s'empiroit de jour en jour" was the uſual reply. To obtain an interview by favourable means was his wiſh. He therefore went to her houſe for that purpoſe.

The dignity of Mr. Sydney's figure and carriage, was what the French call *Très Impoſant*, and the air of defiance he could aſſume, when ſuch a diſplay of the Engliſhman required it, no one he was likely to meet would be able to reſiſt.

Mr. Sydney would not give in his name, but inquired, " Si mi lady étoit viſible? "

By the caution of the porter, it was evident he was not to be admitted— " Monſieur me fera l'honneur de ſon nom? "

But Sydney repeated, " Madame eſt elle viſible?"

The porter taking him, by his accent, for a French gentleman, admitted him without further inquiry. After paſſing through half a dozen footmen, he was ſhewn into the drawing-room, where her Ladyſhip was tête-à-tête at piquet with a Carthuſian Monk. Though taken by ſurpriſe, ſhe had preſence of mind to riſe, and receive Monſieur with all the civility ſhe was miſtreſs of.—After the uſual compliments of condolence, he acquainted her with the ſubject of his viſit, and the Steward's arrival.

She replied, " ſhe had no other buſineſs to tranſact with him, but diſmiſſion at the end of the year. That Sir Charles had left

left her *ſole executrix*, with the enjoyment of his property for life."

Prepared for very unfavourable intelligence, yet Mr. Sydney could not have believed it poſſible that Sir Charles had been ſo great a villain as to leave his niece wholly unprovided for.

After a very unpleaſant dialogue, and a refuſal to produce the laſt will, Mr. Sydney took from his pocket the one made in Colonel Raymond's preſence, where he bequeaths ten thouſand pounds to Miſs Mordaunt, on her marriage to Lord Viſcount Beauclaire, and entails his eſtates as before-mentioned, charged with a jointure of one thouſand a year to Lady Luſignan.

The ſavage joy ſhe expreſſed on finding ſhe had outwitted the Colonel, rouſed Sydney's higheſt ſcorn and indignation. But he obſerved to her, with great earneſtneſs, that this will was good in every point, unleſs a ſubſequent one were produced, and, if produced, reſpectable evidence muſt be given of Sir Charles's ſanity at the period

he made it, and that it was made agreeable in every clauſe to the forms of Engliſh judicature.

The malignity of her exultations was, if poſſible, more iniquitous than the act itſelf, as it betrayed diſpoſitions at which nature ſhuddered. Sydney's diſcernment at once convinced him, that this wretch had ſeduced the weak capacity of her huſband into a belief of ſome fraud intended him by the Colonel, and had then worked upon his reſentment into a total diſinheritance of his niece. Rouſed almoſt to madneſs at ſuch a complication of wickedneſs, he left her abruptly, and returned to Faithful, but remained ſilent as to the laſt will, and confided the former one to his truſt. He went immediately to one of the firſt avocats in Paris, conſulted him on the buſineſs, and retained him as pleader, ſhould the cauſe come before any French Court of Juſtice.

In conſequence of legal application, the laſt will was produced, dated on the third day after the Colonel had left Paris, in which

which he leaves his widow the enjoyment of all his property for life, and half the eſtates at her diſpoſal, with this clauſe—"That he hoped ſhe would conſider his ungrateful niece, Elvira Mordaunt; the other half to the building and ſupport of an Hoſpital for fifty poor Bachelors, who had attained the age of ſeventy-two, and doubles the allowance of their maintenance, provided they continue ſuch the remainder of their days—as a reward for temperance, and a ſure refuge againſt the temptations of matrimony."

This laſt bequeſt being an incontrovertible proof, that the teſtator had never been at any former period more in his ſenſes, or poſſibly ſo much ſo, as at the moment this was expreſſed, little remained for inquiry.

When Mr. Sydney reflected on Miſs Mordaunt's preſent ſituation, with the ſplendid fortune ſhe had every juſt reaſon to expect, with an education, and ſtile of living, equally liberal and elegant, the warmeſt ſentiments of benevolence ani-

mated his reſolutions. He took a ſerious retroſpect of his mind, diſengaged from the paſſions, and acknowledged, what had ever been his practice, that no action of man could be even reſpectable if not accompanied by innocence; and that each enjoyment will ſhortly loſe its charm ſhould it ſtand betwixt us and our integrity.—But that to counteract our deſires, when in competition with honour, is rather good ſenſe than greatneſs of mind.

To many this reaſoning may appear a ſort of romantic philoſophy. But the man who knows the full value of his own happineſs, will acknowledge it is only to be found by him who is ſatisfied with his reflections. Sydney poſſeſſed this elevation of mind in its higheſt refinement, and the moment now preſented to put it to the teſt.

Elvira was ſtill the object of his tendereſt affection. Imagination had repreſented her as the woman, who alone poſſeſſed thoſe virtues, he had found in his eſtimate of conjugal happineſs. But theſe perfections

perfections he was now to contemplate in the poſſeſſion of another.... All the innocent delights, which the ſenſibility of her heart ſo formed her to enjoy, were reſerved for the happy Beauclaire.

Bereft of hope, his only conſolation now was, that he had it yet in his power to attain that point where the mazes of deſtiny can bewilder no more. His temper was formed rather to delight in the pride of aſſiſting unfortunate worth, than the joy of knowing it in a better ſituation; but that pride could alone be felt from the manner in which a benefit was conferred. To execute his wiſhes without diſcovery, obliged him to conſult either the Colonel or Faithful. With Faithful's capacity for ſecrecy he was wholly unacquainted. Admitting that he poſſeſſed it, his motives were ſtill expoſed to a doubtful meaning. Indeed, under every view of the caſe, he thought it only ſafe with his friend; but deſired Faithful, ſhould any converſation with Miſs Mordaunt take place, not to mention their having been

at Paris, or any other circumſtance which might lead to it.

Sydney returned by way of Havre, in order to meet the Colonel at Portſmouth. His honeſt heart was ſtrongly moved at ſuch a ſtatement of facts; but, attempting a complacent ſmile, while the tear trickled in his eye, "She has long been the child of our affections," ſaid he, "and ſhall now be that of our choice!"

He rang the bell, and ordered his writing caſe, when Mr. Sydney begged him to defer all communication on the ſubject till the morrow, having ſomething more to mention, which muſt be previouſly ſettled.—"Indeed it is a requeſt I have to make of yourſelf, with which your compliance will eternally oblige me."

The condeſcenſion of Sydney's addreſs blinded the Colonel's diſcernment.—— "My good friend," replied he, "I think you are morally certain of my free conſent to any thing I can grant."—Sydney then deſired a fair hearing.

"Had

"Had not a prior engagement diſpoſed of Miſs Mordaunt's affection, fortune might have favoured my claim; but, as the attachment I entertained for that Lady was to her merits, not to her uncle's eſtates, the circumſtances of his death have not leſſened their value. Had ſhe accepted my propoſals, my own private fortune would have been allotted to her jointure, (the family eſtates deſcending in the regular line)..... Withheld as I am from this----------"—here he pauſed.——"But there is ſtill one conſolation left, and that remains with you."

The Colonel dreaded the concluded ſentence————

"That you will allow me the ſecret indulgence of préſenting her this tribute of eſteem. Ten thouſand is the legacy bequeathed in the will yet in our poſſeſſion; a copy of the ſubſequent one is not known, nor ever likely to tranſpire."

The Colonel took out his handkerchief, and walked to the window—reſumed his

ſeat,

ſeat, and endeavoured to ſpeak. Every benevolent affection ſeemed ſtruggling in his virtuous mind. He again roſe, and haſtened out of the room.

When he returned, he heartily ſhook hands with his friend.—"Sydney," ſaid he, "you have diſarmed me. To oppoſe ſuch a noble enterprize, I have not the power..... A ſoldier's genius is often fertile in invention—but his purſe ſeldom ſhares in the profit."

Deſirous of avoiding all converſation of ſuch a tendency, he aſſured the Colonel that this inſtance of his friendly confidence was the only effectual cordial he could have adminiſtered.

A deed of gift was immediately prepared, and the buſineſs finally ſettled.—But Sydney, whoſe virtuous deeds never relaxed upon duty, and at other times had fewer intervals than moſt men, thought the intentions of the teſtator not ſufficiently clear in the expreſſion—"Upon her marriage with Lord Viſcount Beauclaire;" therefore, in order to provide againſt all contin-

contingencies, inſerted "at the age of nineteen, whether married or unmarried." The propriety of this clauſe was conſented to by the Colonel, and, after the moſt faithful promiſe of ſecrecy, the conference cloſed.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIV.

ELVIRA had been informed of her uncle's death, by her friend Mrs. Raymond, on the following day; the ſuddenneſs of which contributed in no ſmall degree to heighten her concern. She was by this time in poſſeſſion of the Colonel's letter, acquainting her with the bequeſt of ten thouſand pounds on her marriage with Beauclaire, or when ſhe entered her nineteenth year, ſhould that take place prior to the former event.——Delicacy withheld her from every inquiry as to the diſpoſal of her uncle's eſtates. She had too much ſincerity to wiſh them in the poſſeſſion of his widow; and the ſilence which the Colonel had here obſerved was a rule to her.

Lord

Lord Beauclaire's arrival was now ſhortly expected. The anxiety of her mind, during his abſence, had been known only to herſelf. Her underſtanding would often ſuggeſt the uſefulneſs of fortitude; but the heart would as often interpoſe, and Elvira could not reſiſt this complacent monitor.—With her friends her manners were lively and unreſerved; but to ſtrangers diffident and rather cool, with a ſtrict adherence to propriety towards all. She poſſeſſed faſhionable eaſe, but no one ingredient of its duplicity.—Mr. Shallow ſtood by himſelf the object of her particular diſlike; but Mr. Sydney, from his own perſonal merits and the attachment of the Raymonds, poſſeſſed her high eſteem.

The former had often felt no ſmall vexation at the difference of her behaviour towards Sydney and himſelf, from the mortification to which his vanity was expoſed, and never ſuffered an occaſion to paſs without attempting a ſharp cut againſt

againſt her friend; for whether his alluſions were apt, or otherwiſe, he was ſeldom at the trouble to examine.

Elvira, who never noticed his obſervations unleſs pointedly addreſſed to her, became, from that very cauſe, the perſon uſually diſtinguiſhed; but whenever he ſurpaſſed the rules of good-breeding, (a relaxation in which he frequently indulged himſelf), ſhe would give him to underſtand, in a conciſe ſentence, that the flowers of his rhetoric were too luxuriant. But Shallow's ingenuity could not even extract compliment from ſarcaſm, provided that it came from Miſs Mordaunt. There were moments in which he foretold a tenderneſs on her part; at others that her affections were devoted to Sydney. For Lord Beauclaire's abſence, and the ſilence which had been obſerved in regard to that engagement, prevented any poſſible ſuſpicion.

The reader will be convinced, by this time, that Shallow had no pretenſions either

ther to love or eſteem; his heart was too cold to feel the former, and his underſtanding never went in ſearch of better qualities than his own. An undiſciplined character he had no objection to, as that afforded an opportunity for experience to prune: but he had vanity to ſupport, and the reputation of a gallant man. He had cheriſhed a lucky hint, that gallantry determines the true ſpirit of character; and, finding the outlines correct, was determined the figure ſhould not be deficient in colouring and expreſſion. But as it frequently happens to geniuſſes of the ſhallow claſs, that their attention being more fixed upon the applauſe of the audience than the deſign of their part, ſucceſs ſeldom attends their performance; with as many eccentric talents as would have ſerved at leaſt half a dozen reaſonable characters: ſtill Shallow was not deficient in ſome good qualities. He was charitable and generous. His intentions were not diſhoneſt; but imagination taking in all the different views of his ſubject at the

the ſame time, gave his conduct a very unfavourable appearance; and his errors were more frequently attributed to want of principle than reflection.

Lord Beauclaire was hourly expected, and Shallow ſet out for Portſmouth to welcome his arrival, and to be the firſt to communicate to his friend, Miſs Mordaunt's intended marriage with Mr. Sydney. But his Lordſhip having met with letters at Spithead, acquainting him with his father's dangerous illneſs, haſtened to Paris, where the Earl then was, and diſpatched an expreſs to that effect to the Colonel.

In a few days the French mail brought letters to the whole family, containing a favourable account, and the one to Elvira expreſſed the moſt ardent impatience for their meeting, which was ſure to take place immediately as his father could undertake the journey. His tenderneſs and attachment were, if poſſible, more animated than ever.

Elvira,

Elvira, whoſe feelings were equally alive, could not but ſecretly lament the cauſe of this delay, though her heart repreſented him, at the ſame time, more amiable and more deſerving her regard by ſuch an inſtance of filial affection. But, in her anſwer, urged many laudable reaſons for remaining at Paris, till the Earl could ſupport the fatigue of travelling with perfect ſafety.

Beauclaire, judging by his own heart what her's muſt experience, was more enraptured than ever. The death of Sir Charles had been communicated to him both by the Colonel and Elvira in the firſt inſtance, and ſhortly after particulars of her uncle's will as far as it regarded herſelf. She was too confident of Beauclaire's affection to entertain a moment's doubt of his ſentiment's towards her, though her preſent fortune was ſunk infinitely below her uncle's promiſe. Theſe letters had not reached to that; the intelligence came to him by accident ſhortly after his arrival

at

at Paris.—Concluding from the time which had intervened, the ſame had been forwarded; yet, being on the ſpot, thought he might as well make a few inquiries himſelf into the Baronet's finances.

The regular application was to the widow; but, from the impreſſion he had received of this alliance, he could have wiſhed for information from any other quarter. A cloſe attendance on his father preventing any round-about inquiry, he determined on a viſit.

Her Ladyſhip received him with high deference and humility, having imbibed very high ideas of conſequence and condeſcenſion to a lord.

Beauclaire introduced his ſubject, touched lightly upon the death of good Sir Charles, and then came quickly to the point. She roſe and fetched the will; but, had a thunderbolt fallen at his feet, he could not have been more ſurpriſed than on reading its contents.

She aſſured his Lordſhip, "que, Monſieur, feu ſon mari, ne ſe laiſſoit jamais influé

flué de qui que ce ſoit"—" that her huſband never, never ſuffered himſelf to be influenced by any one: that his niece, during her viſit in Paris, had entirely forfeited his good opinion, giving herſelf up to every ſort of diſſipation—was always *diſtraite*, *pré-occupeé*; and, in ſhort, diſcovered a turn of mind highly mortifying to his feelings.

Lord Beauclaire here interrupted, informing her, Miſs Mordaunt was the lady whom he hoped ſhortly to have the honour of calling his wife.

" Ah! pour ça, oui," ſaid ſhe, " ſi vous étiez, Monſieur de Sydney."

He impatiently urged her to tell him what ſhe meant by her reply.

" Sans façon, milor, le voilà."—She informed him that a perſon of the name of Sydney had been ſent to demand an interview, accompanied by the ſteward, about a fortnight after Sir Charles's death.—This ſhe declined, " étant abſorbeé de chagrin;" but that, regardleſs of her ſituation,

tion, he had compelled the porter to let him in, with threats, if he refuſed, of carrying him before the Municipality. That he forced his way through ſeveral apartments, and abruptly entered her boudoir during her devotions with her Confeſſor; and, in the preſence of the Holy Father, inſulted her in the moſt opprobrious terms: that he was engaged to Miſs Mordaunt; but finding Sir Charles had thought proper to leave her entirely to the affections of her aunt, his violence ſo increaſed that St. Pierre, alarmed at her perſonal danger, rang for the protection of her ſervants. It is reported Mr. Sydney is much attached to her, and that their nuptials will ſhortly take place.

The conflict in Beauclaire's mind deprived him ſome moments of utterance. Perceiving ſhe had rouſed the turbulent paſſions of reſentment and jealouſy, her point was gained; and addreſſing him in a complacent tone—" S'il étoit queſtion de mi lor Beauclaire j'lavais conſigné-la moilé

moitié de mon revenu—mais helas!"—— His Lordſhip expreſſed his thanks as well as he was able, and took leave.

On his return he found two packets, which, upon opening, contained the ſeveral letters written upon this event. On referring to the cover, found they arrived at Jamaica two days after he had quitted the iſland, and forwarded by the Antelope frigate then ſailing for England. The Colonel's firſt packet contained no more than Sir Charles's death; but the ſecond differed very widely from what he had juſt heard—"Ten thouſand pounds is the legacy bequeathed by her uncle, and, on ſuch conditions, which he would have eſtimated, but a few hours before, at an invaluable price." Scarcely could he believe what he ſaw, or what he heard. The whole was enchantment, enveloped in doubt and myſtery.

He read the Colonel's a ſecond time. The air of ſympathy which breathed through the whole ſtill gave it the appearance of truth.

He then read Elvira's, weighed every ſentence, endeavoured by all the ingenuity of miſconſtruction to develope her motives.... It was not to be done—and he rolled up the papers, and was haſtening, almoſt unconſcious of what he did, to refute ſuch baſe and atrocious calumny, when a ſervant entered to acquaint his Lordſhip an Engliſh gentleman was below, and impatient to be admitted. His attention being wholly abſorbed, the ſervant repeated the meſſage.

"No—not at home."

The man had but left the room when he rang his bell, and aſked the name.

"Mr. Shallow."

"Shall be down immediately."

He then unrolled the papers—read Elvira's letter a third time: her affection was more tender than ever. The animated pleaſure with which ſhe congratulated his late victory—the enchanting ſcenes of domeſtic happineſs, repreſented in ſuch harmony and innocence, expreſſed with a pathos and energy that penetrated to the ſoul;

ſoul; and at the very moment her heart was devoted to another. . . . . It was not in nature. The ſuſpicion was injurious to her honour—the aſperſion too invidious for-------

Here the ſervant entered to acquaint his Lordſhip Mr. Shallow had waited two hours, and concluded his viſit had eſcaped recollection.—He haſtened down.—The uſual ceremonies over, and inquiries after Engliſh friends, Shallow began by ſome faſhionable anecdotes, and continued in this ſtrain ſome time; when accidentally finding himſelf at the end of a period, aſked Beauclaire, "if it was not too ridiculous for credit?"—But he was talking to himſelf.

The queſtion being repeated, in order to get rid of it, replied, "that he told a ſtory with a good grace."

This gave him confidence. Finding his companion ſatisfied, he ſatisfied himſelf.—"So, after all, who do you think our great heireſs has made choice of?—Surely

the laſt in the world one ſhould have ſuppoſed congenial with her taſte..... Dieu merci!—This is not the age for deſpair, when we ſee old bachelor Beaux contend for conqueſt, and carry off the prize before imagination has time to ſound a retreat."

Beauclaire who heard only the laſt word, "Retreat!" exclaimed he; "why, a more complete victory was never one.—The enemy were more than double the number, and we fairly beat them off the field to a man—then what do you call a retreat?"

Shallow ſtared, as well he might, and, not being very ſucceſsful in metaphor, felt no inclination to return to the engagement.

A dead ſilence prevailed for ſome time, when Shallow thought he would venture the ſtory as he conceived it.

"So, Miſs Mordaunt-------"

"Who did you ſay, Miſs Mordaunt!—Well—what of Miſs Mordaunt?"

Shallow

Shallow drew back his chair a few ſteps ----- "Is only going to be married."

"Well, Shallow, and any thing extraordinary that Miſs Mordaunt ſhould marry?"

"No—no"—replied Shallow, "there is nothing extraordinary—but her choice!"

"And what ſingularity does that imply?"

"Come, come, Beauclaire, you mean to be jocular."

"The laſt thing in my thoughts!"

"Why, when forty can bid defiance to twenty-five, does it not humble the vanity of us young men?"

"Who is forty?—What do you mean?"

"Why, ſurely Sydney is forty at leaſt. .... Yes, my friend, a treaty of marriage is actually on foot between Sydney and Miſs Mordaunt."

Beauclaire ſtarted from his chair, ſtalked acroſs the room, approached Shallow in a menacing attitude—but could not ſpeak.—The latter, not a little appalled at

Beauclaire's violence, aſſured him, with great meekneſs, "he meant but to entertain, and to give him the advantage of a *plaiſantarie* on his arrival."

Beauclaire, in the utmoſt agitation, ſternly obſerved, "that if he meant a joke upon any ſubject in which Miſs Mordaunt was concerned, it would not be received as ſuch by him; and if he had any matter of fact to communicate, to let him have it inſtantly."——Miſs Mordaunt's attention to Mr. Sydney, his conſtant viſits at the Colonel's, and the report of an approaching marriage, (which Mr. Sydney's manners confirmed), were the grounds upon which he had formed his opinion.

Beauclaire liſtened attentively to this account, which correſponded with what Lady Luſignan had related; and apologiſing to Shallow for quitting him ſo abruptly, left the room.

The latter, having failed in his ſubject of entertainment, was not ſorry to find himſelf at liberty, and for ſome time bade adieu to his friend.

All

All the different paſſions of love, reſentment, jealouſy, and revenge, ruſhed like a torrent upon his mind.—Satisfaction from Sydney was the firſt meaſure, and then from the Colonel, who had treacherouſly forfeited his truſt, and expoſed the youth, innocence, and inexperience of Elvira to the arts of low diſſimulation; and, under the maſk of friendſhip, triumph over his credulous friend. But Sydney was the immediate object of his revenge. Stimulated by every dreadful reflection, he determined on ſending him a challenge the inſtant he reached Dover.

The Earl, ſenſibly affected at this ſudden change in his ſon, urged him to confidence; aſſuring him, with the moſt fervent and pathetic tenderneſs, that, be the ſubject what it may, it ſhould be ſure to receive his warmeſt ſympathy.

Beauclaire ſaw the precipice on which he was advancing, and the ſudden danger which threatened him; but his ſpirit, raſh and daring in this enterpriſe, refuſed to

acknowledge any efforts but his own to reſcue him from deſtruction. He thanked his generous father, but replied, the cauſe of his affliction was not of a nature to communicate—that his preſence in England was immediately requiſite—that his honour demanded it.——The Earl was ſilent, but gave orders for his own departure at the ſame time. The old gentleman conſoled himſelf with the reflection, that this violent conflict of paſſions muſt ſhortly exhauſt itſelf, and diſpoſe his ſon to liſten to the calm dictates of reaſon.

On the third day they reached Dover, but not a word eſcaped his lips. This awful ſilence was, if poſſible, more alarming than his former impetuoſity. The poor Earl was ſtill in a very feeble ſtate, and wholly unequal to the affliction with which he had now to contend. He had exerted all his endeavours to prevail upon his ſon to unboſom his diſtreſs, and they had proved ineffectual. The ſtruggle had exhauſted his ſtrength, and ſunk him into a penſive

a penſive melancholy. The paſſage, though ſhort, brought on a fever, and confined him for ſome days to his bed.

Beauclaire, though abſorbed by grief, felt every pang of paternal ſorrow, and, by ſilent acts of the moſt endearing tenderneſs, pathetically lamented a misfortune he could not relieve.

This diſtreſſing ſcene was obſerved by the innkeeper, which, added to the ſervants affliction, who ſeemed to partake ſo feelingly in their maſter's ſufferings, determined him to communicate his apprehenſions to a gentleman, who arrived on the preceding day, and whoſe benevolent countenance he thought a certain indication of ſuccour.——The gentleman deſired to ſpeak to one of his Lordſhip's ſervants, and wrote as follows:———

"Mr. H. would apologiſe for the liberty of this introduction, had he any other motive than has ariſen from the humanity of his hoſt. This urges him to ſay, if the preſence of a perſon, well experienced in the viciſſitudes of life,

can adminiſter conſolation, or alleviate affliction, a verbal anſwer to that effect will be ſufficient."

Addreſſed to the Earl of Sefton.

His Lordſhip deſired his ſon to read it, raiſing his aged eyes, anxiouſly impatient for the contents. The philanthropy of the writer was too lively in the recollection of every Britiſh boſom not to entitle this attention to the moſt grateful reception.

Beauclaire followed the ſervant; but Mr. H. gave him the meeting in order to avoid the embarraſſment of an abrupt interview, and joined him to his father's apartment. He went up to his Lordſhip's bedſide, and, cordially preſſing his hand, ſat down. Beauclaire left them together. The Earl fixed his eyes in his gentle countenance: the ſignal was inſtantly obſerved. "Unboſom your diſtreſs here, my Lord, where it ſhall find not only an aſylum, but, I truſt, a friend and comforter!"

The Earl related with energy, though in a faint voice, the ſubject of his ſorrow; and lamented, with deep anguiſh, that he ſhould

ſhould moſt probably leave the world without a full conviction of his ſon's integrity. Mr. H. endeavoured to bring his mind to a cheerful reſignation, whatever might be the event.

"Let us (ſaid he) ſtill endeavour to preſerve to ourſelves this reward—that we have borne our ſorrows with manly dignity. But remember, my friend, the dread of future evils is, in moſt caſes, greater than the evil itſelf, and that paſt misfortunes are aggravated by lamenting them. That affliction, harſh and rigid as it may appear, when well ſuſtained, never yet failed to bring with it an honourable recompence. What does not our excellent moraliſt teach us on this ſubject—that

'Sweet are the uſes of adverſity,
'Which, like the toad, ugly and venomous,
'Wears yet a precious jewel on his head.'

Exert the powers you ſtill poſſeſs, and rely with confidence on ſucceſs: and if you will not think me an enthuſiaſt, let me alſo

recal to your recollection, that the calamities, as well as the delights of life, are but for a ſeaſon; and that he who has enjoyed the latter with becoming humility, has nothing to dread from a different ſcene of action."

The Earl felt himſelf much relieved by his friend's diſcourſe, and Mr. H. left him for a few hours.

After reflecting very earneſtly on the ſituation of the father and ſon, what could demand ſuch inflexible ſilence, and by what means his ſervices could be acceptable without interference, Lord Beauclaire knocked, and was admitted.

His Lordſhip expreſſed his obligations to Mr. H. for his friendly attention to his father; and, after repeating what he had ſo ſtrenuouſly maintained, that the ſubject was not of a nature to be communicated, ſolicited Mr. H.'s further benevolence in perfecting the cure he had ſo kindly begun, and continue to his father the indulgence of his ſociety during his own ſhort abſence in town. Mr. H. replied, with a complacent

complacent but expreſſive earneſtneſs, that the propriety of that ſtep muſt depend upon the motive which called for it—that he was not the man actuated by a deſire of penetrating the receſſes of affliction, further than as ſuch an inquiry might enable him to relieve it, yet he feared that in the preſent inſtance he might appear influenced by other circumſtances, his Lordſhip having implied a direct negative by his preceding obſervation.

Lord Beauclaire apologiſed for a conduct apparently ſo ungenerous, in ſoliciting a confidence he could not deſerve. But, as the ſubject in queſtion involved in it the fate of ſome of his neareſt and deareſt friends, he was perſuaded that Mr. H. was the laſt man to accept a truſt, which could not be repoſed without the violation of integrity and honour.

Mr. H. obſerved, that integrity could bear but one conſtruction; but that honour, in faſhionable life, admitted of various modifications, and was more frequently the impulſe of paſſion than a ſteady guide

to

to ward off danger and ignominy: that the paſſions were the rocks and ſhoals upon which humanity ſplit; and while we ſuffer ourſelves to be thus directed, is it to be wondered at that ſo many raſh adventurers periſh in the purſuit?—"Am I, then, to infer, Sir, that the paſſions were entruſted to us for uſeleſs purpoſes?—By no means. To their influence we are indebted for all that is amiable in man—that we are excited to the beſt and nobleſt purpoſes—that our conceptions are grand, our ſentiments elevated, our actions honourable. It is by them that the human ſoul attains thoſe ſublime heights, from which it ſurveys the full extent and dignity of its nature. To counteract and control them is all that will be expected from us. I may appear to your Lordſhip rather primitive in my ideas; but long experience has made me conſider the misfortunes of life as more immediately the conſequence of our own miſconduct than accident, or want of charity in mankind."

Beauclaire

Beauclaire liſtened with earneſt attention, and with that candour, which entirely met Mr. H.'s character, offered to relate every particular, provided that he would receive them without perſonal diſtinction. Mr. H. replied that his Lordſhip muſt be aware of the impoſſibility of receiving them in confidence: that his father would feel it hard to be denied that truſt, which had been extorted by the importunity of a ſtranger; and whether that very circumſtance might not render his ſervices uſeleſs by exciting miſtruſt, or, at beſt, by alarming apprehenſions?—"I do not mean to beg the queſtion, my Lord; but it is too evident you have ſome violent object in contemplation, and the reſtraint which your father's ſituation now impoſes may ſave you from a life of anguiſh and remorſe?"

"No! Mr. H. I have been injured in the tendereſt part—every earthly bleſſing treacherouſly wreſted from me... anguiſh may be my portion, but remorſe never ſhall... My honour is my life—to that every tie of

of exiſtence is rivetted.... Filial affection and duty I truſt to feel, and reſpect as highly as any man—but, in competition with honour, is a mere phantom!

'He that is robb'd, not wanting what is ſtolen—
'Let him not know it, and he's not robb'd at all.'

"Had the object of my affection been diſhonourable, time and reflection would have reconciled me to its loſs; had I been enſlaved by the paſſions, to reaſon I muſt have been indebted for my freedom, and the horrors of captivity would have appeared but as a dream.—But what did ſhe not poſſeſs?—Every thing that was great and amiable in woman:—a form on which angelic beauty had diffuſed its higheſt charms—a mind ſplendid in every gift—refined ſentiment—an expreſſion in which every ſoft attraction dwelt; and, with all theſe, a heart ſuſceptible of the moſt pure and exalted pleaſures!..... Her firſt, her deareſt vow ſhe pledged to me, to me alone.—With what enchanting eloquence did

did ſhe repeat on our laſt farewel—'Yes, Beauclaire, affection is interwoven with remembrance.'—Then caſting a look upon a miniature I had juſt given her—'And this (ſaid ſhe) ſhall be my faithful taliſman; whatever evil aſſails, or danger threatens, a firm friend you ſhall ever find in your Elvira.'—As ſhe ſpoke, the parting tear trickled in her radiant eye, and the ſmile of heavenly love beamed on her bluſhing cheek." He now ſunk back into the chair, and, for a few moments, his countenance expreſſed the moſt pathetic ſorrow.

Mr. H. was happy to perceive this favourable diſpoſition, and endeavoured, by the warmeſt ſympathy, to keep his mind open to ſuch tender impreſſions; but the idea inſtantly fled, when Beauclaire, looking earneſtly at Mr. H.———

"Sir, (ſaid he), by the misfortune of my father's illneſs I have had leiſure for reflection—I am neither hurried by the impetuoſity of love, nor yet by reſentment. But this lapſe of time has had no other effect than confirming my firſt reſolutions.

Reaſon

Reaſon is no leſs formidable than paſſion, though its attacks may be leſs violent; but it takes a ſucceſsful aim, and, by one blow, defeats its adverſary."

Mr. H. now fully appriſed of his ſituation, aſſured him of his tendereſt commiſeration; and then aſked if he were in poſſeſſion of ſuch evidence as to juſtify accuſation?

"Indubitably ſo—the ſtrongeſt poſſible. But though I have ſo long infringed on your attention, permit me, Sir, to obſerve, that I ſeek no other redreſs than what juſtice demands, and this is not to be delayed.—To-morrow, at an early hour, I ſet off for town; and though I cannot but repeat my wiſhes in regard to my father, I can no further enforce the ſubject than as it ſhall concur, in all points, with your judgment..... The little which has eſcaped me, in the unreſerve of converſation, I am confident you will not comment on with ſeverity, nor yet ſuffer it to come to my father's knowledge. My return is uncertain; but, by your permiſſion, Sir, immediate

immediate information ſhall be diſpatched to you?"

"My Lord, you muſt give me a patient hearing. Delicacy and reſpect to your diſtreſs have hitherto kept me ſilent: but I cannot be witneſs of a complication of miſery, into which you are involving both yourſelf and all that is dear to you, without offering ſome arguments to your conſideration..... You are not to learn, my Lord, that the higheſt act in the mind of man is to maintain a calm but ſteady fortitude in the midſt of danger; and that it is more by conduct than courage that the nobleſt enterprizes prove ſucceſsful. In the common intercourſe of life there may be few occaſions to call forth the great and eminent virtues: but he who has not ſhaken off all regard to the dictates of his own mind, concerning good and evil, will have ſo employed his leiſure hours that he is never to be taken unprepared. It is not under the dominion of paſſion that we liſten to the reproofs of probity and juſtice. The ſlave ſeldom returns to liberty with the

the freedom he once enjoyed. All independence and energy of character are deſtroyed, and he looks back upon his captivity with pangs the moſt agoniſing to a virtuous mind, when he reflects that he yielded to a tyranny which a brave reſiſtance might have eaſily repelled.

" In a moral and religious ſenſe, the forgiveneſs of injuries has ever been eſteemed one of the brighteſt virtues.—Read the annals of Greece and Rome, where, at a certain period, every moral excellence had attained the nobleſt height. Magnanimity was then the moſt diſtinguiſhing characteriſtics.

" Pardon me, my Lord, if I ſpeak with more unreſerve than our ſhort acquaintance can juſtify; but the intereſt I feel on this ſubject will claim, I truſt, your forgiveneſs.

" I infer, from what you have ſaid, that the motive of your journey is to adjuſt an affair of honour. Agreeable to the maxims of the world, the ſword, or piſtol, is the only reſource; and to launch into eternity

eternity under the ſtrongeſt impreſſions of guilt, or take away the life of your adverſary, the only reparation it can receive.

"Is this imaginary heroiſm to be put in competition with that firm and ſedate courage which can execute the commands of reaſon and conſcience; maintain the dignity of our nature, and the ſtation aſſigned us; enable us to repel the ſtings of calumny, the ſhafts of reſentment, and boldly confide on our own ſtrength?

"Cuſtoms and prepoſſeſſions have ſo far prevailed over an unthinking world, that diſtreſſed virtue may be leſs eſteemed than ſucceſsful vice; and, in things of ſmall conſideration, it may poſſibly be for good purpoſes that the ſenſe of other men ought to influence. But it goes no further. In concerns, where truth and honour are engaged, the mind reſts on its own baſis; and ſtands, or falls, according to the ſtrength and weakneſs of its defence.—Happy for us this world is not the arbiter of our fate; and that there is a tribunal from

from which there can be no appeal, where we ſhall ſtand in preſence of the Supreme Being to receive the ſentence due to our conduct.

'Let a man's innocence be (as Dr. Sherlock ſays) what it may; let his virtues riſe to the higheſt perfection attainable in this life—ſtill there will be, in him, ſo many ſecret ſins, ſo many human frailties, ſo many offences of ignorance, paſſion, and prejudice, ſo many unguarded words and thoughts; in ſhort, ſo many defects in his beſt actions, that, without the advantage of ſuch an expiation and atonement as Chriſtianity has revealed to us, it is impoſſible he ſhould be able to ſtand before his Sovereign Judge.'

"Then what will be the lot of him who commits a crime which muſt ſurvive even the poſſibility of repentance; and, with a ſoul polluted by blood, ruſh into the preſence of his Maker!.... Thou art the man!—ſtart with horror at the ſcene before you! It appals humanity—it ſtrikes like

like a flash of lightning from the dark tremendous cloud, and shivers you to atoms!"

Beauclaire was so sensibly affected, that his friend began to hope he might be effectually diverted from his design; but on joining the Earl at dinner his Lordship was not there. On desiring he might be informed, an elderly servant of the Earl's said, in a tremulous voice, "that Lord Beauclaire had left Dover more than an hour;" and, unobserved by his master, put a note into Mr. H.'s hand. This was not the moment to open it, persuaded it could not be of a nature to afford consolation.

Every sympathetic care and tenderness were administered by this excellent man; and on the following day he and the Earl set our for London.

CHAP.

CHAP. XV.

THE Colonel was much ſurpriſed that letters had not been received from Beauclaire, and began to fear the Earl was dead, or his ſituation ſuch as wholly to require his ſon's attention. But theſe reaſons were too futile to ſatisfy the anxious ſuſpenſe of his friends. Elvira began to be very uneaſy. Her laſt letter had not been anſwered; nor had a line been received ſince his firſt arrival at Paris. Mr. Sydney, who did not viſit at Berkeley Square ſo frequently as uſual, from a delicacy readily interpreted, called one morning as Mrs. Raymond and Elvira were ſtepping into the carriage, and, after talking with them a few minutes, went in to the Colonel. They had not been long together

together before a letter was brought to the latter. On opening it, it contained only a note to himſelf, with a letter ſealed, directed—The Hon. Mr. Sydney.

"This is ſurely Beauclaire's hand," ſaid the Colonel. - - - - -

"Lord Viſcount Beauclaire will eſteem it an honour, if Colonel Raymond would forward the encloſed, his Lordſhip being unacquainted with Mr. Sydney's town reſidence."

Mr. Sydney's as follows:———

"Sir,

"In conſequence of two reports made me, on the moſt indubitable authority, that overtures of marriage have long ſince been propoſed by you to Miſs Mordaunt, and accepted by that lady, I have only to obſerve, that as the ſame honour had been conferred on me previous to my departure for the Weſt Indies, the ſatisfaction due to a prior claim cannot be delayed.

"On Friday morning, at ſeven o'clock, I ſhall depend upon meeting you in Hyde Park.

"I have the honour to be,
"Sir,
"Your moſt obedient ſervant,
"BEAUCLAIRE."

The Colonel looked at Mr. Sydney with awful aſtoniſhment, and the ſurpriſe of the latter was not leſs.—"What my Lord Beauclaire can mean I am wholly at a loſs to imagine; but I ſhall certainly be faithful to the appointment?"—And he wrote to that effect notwithſtanding the Colonel's earneſt entreaties to the contrary: nor would he queſtion the meſſenger. The Colonel felt this attack on the character of his noble friend more acutely than if it had been made upon himſelf. Such an atrocious calumny could not have been invented but by ſome perſon in habits of intimacy with the family. The Colonel moſt ſolemnly aſſured Mr. Sydney, that not a ſyllable

ſyllable had ever eſcaped his lips. Of this he was fully convinced. Beſides, the charge was in itſelf ſo baſe a falſehood, that no other refutation could be made than what Mr. Sydney was prepared for.

The Colonel, unknown to his friend, ſent immediately to the Earl's houſe to inquire if Lord Beauclaire had been there, and if he had, or that any intelligence could be given where he was to be found, to ſignify to his Lordſhip he ſhould call upon him at ſix o'clock. But his arrival was not known. The Colonel ſent to ſeveral other places, but to no purpoſe. How to diſcloſe ſuch an event to Elvira exceeded all his efforts. But, in order to avoid obſervation or inquiry, he returned home with Mr. Sydney, leaving a note for Mrs. Raymond, to ſay he ſhould not dine at home. Mr. Sydney made a final arrangement of his affairs, and, through the whole day, was perfectly compoſed and cheerful. The honeſt Colonel, in the midſt of his affliction, could not but admire his friend's fortitude. Such ſentiments were exactly his own: but when

he reflected on the noble line of conduct he had purſued, and the recent acts of magnanimity to which he probably would fall a ſacrifice, every feeling of ſcorn and indignation roſe in his mind. Sydney endeavoured to make light of the matter, however it might end; but he could not bring his friend to think calmly of ſuch an awful ſeparation. Late in the evening they parted; the Colonel promiſing to be on the ground a quarter before ſeven.

On his return he found Mrs. Raymond alone as he expected, Elvira being gone to a ball with Lady Cleaveland. His diſtreſſed countenance led inſtantly to the queſtion. But ſuch was the ſhock to Mrs. Raymond, that the Colonel could with difficulty keep her from fainting.

Her affection for this amiable young pair was almoſt maternal; and her eſteem for Mr. Sydney ſo heightened by his late diſintereſted conduct, that it was not poſſible to rejoice at the felicity of the former, without mingling a tear of pity to the hopeleſs fate of her generous friend.

The

The delicate ſituation in which Elvira now ſtood withheld all communication for the preſent; and Lord Beauclaire appeared in every ſenſe highly reprehenſible. Admitting that ſuch a rumour had reached him, he had experienced too many real acts of friendſhip from the Colonel to juſtify the raſh ſtep he had taken. A previous application to him was a reſpect clearly his due. Elvira being immediately under his and Mrs. Raymond's protection, no propoſal of marriage was likely to have been made, much leſs received, but by their concurrence.

Admitting this—to their reſponſibility ſhould have been the firſt appeal. Though Mrs. Raymond ſilently agreed to all the Colonel had advanced, yet, well knowing the impetuoſity of men in points of honour, ſhe dreaded her very looks leſt they ſhould ſtimulate the indignation, which, by this time, had gained no weak aſcendency over his regard for Beauclaire.

Soft and gentle as was the Colonel's temper, he was a lion when provoked,

and ingratitude to others was a crime he did not readily forgive. But here it was a ſecond conſideration; for an event, aggravated by ſuch multiplied evils, left little leiſure to reflect upon private ſufferings.

He did not pointedly ſay he was to be Mr. Sydney's ſecond; but this Mrs. Raymond expected. It was an indiſpenſible attention. He ordered himſelf to be called at an early hour, to be in time for an explanation before Sydney arrived.

The clock ſtruck ſix when he reached the appointed place, where he walked about watching the motion of every leaf in hopes of ſeeing Beauclaire. Preciſely a quarter before ſeven his Lordſhip arrived, accompanied by a gentleman, who, when they came nearer, the Colonel ſaw to be Major D'Arcy. The Colonel and Beauclaire bowed, and remained ſilent. Major D'Arcy aſſured the Colonel he was heartily ſorry to meet him upon ſuch an occaſion; but that he was in hopes the affair might be ſettled at a leſs expence than by ſhedding

ding the blood of two reſpectable men.—Here Beauclaire interrupted, by ſaying, "he knew of no compromiſe that could be accepted."

Punctual to the moment Mr. Sydney arrived. The Major ſeemed aſtoniſhed at his appearance, ſuppoſing the party in queſtion to be his brother; this gentleman being his particular friend, and one with whoſe character he had been well acquainted for the laſt twenty years. He therefore requeſted a conference with the Colonel of a few minutes, in which the latter ſo fully convinced him of the atrocious calumny levelled againſt Mr. Sydney by this attack, that he requeſted his Lordſhip, with Mr. Sydney's permiſſion, to liſten to a full explanation. This was agreed to; and he related, on the Colonel's depoſition, ſuch circumſtances as completely exonerated Mr. Sydney from the poſſibility of any pretenſions to the lady. Lord Beauclaire inſtantly diſcharged his piſtol in the air, and gave up as his authority Lady Luſignan, with the corroborating evidence

of Mr. Shallow. This was followed by the moſt handſome apology to Mr. Sydney. To the Colonel his Lordſhip expreſſed himſelf with the moſt filial concern. The atonement was readily accepted by each party, who walked off the field together, and then took leave, after the Colonel had engaged them to dinner on the following day.

Mrs. Raymond had been the laſt hour watching his return. At length he appeared, with a cheerful countenance; a certain indication all was well. She had given orders that Miſs Mordaunt might not be waited upon till ſhe rang, having returned at a late hour, and ſhe wiſhed her not to be diſturbed. Mrs. Raymond's kind intention was to prolong her abſence till ſhe knew how the affair had terminated. But Elvira, ſcrupulouſly cautious of infringing upon eſtabliſhed hours, roſe immediately as ſhe waked, it being near ten when the family breakfaſted. Juſt as the Colonel and his Lady ſat down for that purpoſe, Mr. Shallow was announced.—

He

He arrived on the preceding day, and took the earlieſt opportunity of paying his reſpects. This ceremony would have been readily diſpenſed with at any other time, but was little to be borne with at the preſent. However, the cool reception he received did not diſcourage him. Mrs. Raymond, with ſome difficulty, inquired if he had breakfaſted?—But he had reſerved to himſelf the honour of partaking of her's.—The Colonel looked as he felt, as uncomfortable as any one could be.

" What a horrid eaſterly wind, Colonel? —It locks up all one's faculties!..... (The Colonel gave a nod).—A powerful repellant to genius!—I have ſome where read that Sappho could never compoſe during its baneful influence; and I feel the ſame effect in a little jeu d'eſprit I was attempting a few hours ago----

" —For ſoon as morning, from her orient bed,
" Had ting'd the grotto with her earlieſt red."

" I cannot recollect the remainder.—Mrs. Raymond is, I think, a friend to the Muſes?"

All this frivolity getting the better of the Colonel's patience, he ſaid, " When you have breakfaſted, Sir, I have a queſtion to aſk."

" Toujours prèt, Colonel, me voilà."

Addreſſing him with a very ſtern countenance—" Pray, Sir, did you ever receive any intimation from me, or my family, that Mr. Sydney had made propoſals of marriage to Miſs Mordaunt, and which were accepted by that Lady?"

" Colonel, I moſt certainly never heard you ſignify ſuch a circumſtance."

" But what then, Sir, have you heard to juſtify the report you made to my Lord Beauclaire, that ſuch an event was ſhortly to take place?"

" 'Pon honour, I meant no harm to Mr. Sydney, or his Lordſhip; and to Miſs Mordaunt, I hope you will allow the perfect impoſſibility. I juſt mentioned

ed it to him as the bagatelle of the moment—that was all, indeed, my good Colonel."

"And do you call blowing a man's brains out a bagatelle?"

"You aſtoniſh me, Colonel—the whole was this: obſerving Mr. Sydney always *aux petits ſoins*; and that ſhe, Miſs Mordaunt I mean—I beg pardon—but hurry deſtroys all arrangement—could not poſſibly remain inſenſible to that gentleman's ſuperior merit; the fair inference was, that—marriage muſt ſhortly be the conſequence. In converſation with Lord Beauclaire I mentioned it..... A mere impromptu—nothing more: and now, Colonel, you have the full particulars."

"This impromptu, Sir, as you call it, was prepared forty-eight hours at leaſt before it came to hand."

"I am heartily ſorry, Colonel, if I have innocently been the cauſe of any miſunderſtanding between theſe gentlemen, and am ready to make every apology to Mr. Sydney, Lord Beauclaire, and Miſs

Mordaunt."—At this moment Elvira entered the room, when, turning from the Colonel, he advanced towards her, begging her pardon for the miſtake he had committed reſpecting Lord Beauclaire, and the honour he had conferred upon Mr. Sydney; but in ſuch rapid utterance that the Colonel could neither ſtop, nor even reſtrain him.

Elvira, all amazement at the ſingularity of this addreſs, looked alternately at the Colonel and Mrs. Raymond for an explanation—but he ſtill perſevered.

"If any fatal conſequences------" Here Elvira ſo far recovered her ſurpriſe as to beg to know immediately what Mr. Shallow could mean?—But Beauclaire's recent danger was not to be mentioned in Shallow's preſence, and Mrs. Raymond took her out of the room.

It is true this incautious man had not touched upon any part of the ſubject, ſo as to excite apprehenſions of what had really happened; yet had poſſibly done worſe; and as Beauclaire's ſilence had given his conduct a myſterious appearance,

Mrs.

Mrs. Raymond was at a loſs how to act. There were ſo many motives for wiſhing ſecrecy, and ſo many for explanation, that, in a matter of ſo much importance, ſhe wiſely left the whole to the Colonel's judgment. However, to appeaſe her young friend, ſhe aſſured her his Lordſhip was well, and meant ſhortly to ſurpriſe her by a viſit, which Shallow's egregious folly and interference had now prevented. Theſe two facts compounded for every thing elſe; and the confuſed and embarraſſed manner in which his addreſs had been delivered atoned for the choice of words in which it had been arrayed,

Elvira anxiouſly inquired when the Colonel expected him? But Mrs. Raymond replied, with a ſmile, "that, being miſtreſs of the grand ſecret, ſhe poſitively would not tell her more, but leave her imagination every entertainment ſhe wiſhed it," and, under pretext of letters to write, left her, and went to the Colonel upon hearing Shallow was gone.

The

The Colonel obſerved it was not poſſible to heſitate a moment as to the ſtep neceſſary to be taken; but previous to any converſation with Lord Beauclaire, he ſhould conſult Mr. Sydney. That the motive of his conduct towards Elvira remained as it was; but that circumſtances prevented its acceptance. That an explanation muſt be made; and that he felt himſelf reſponſible to each party for every tranſaction in that buſineſs—and if there had been any thing wrong, or what Lord Beauclaire diſproved, the blame was his. But how to communicate to Elvira the ſame unpleaſant facts the Colonel knew not.—It was his wiſh, and muſt be doubly ſo that of Beauclaire, ſhe ſhould be kept in ignorance of what had happened, both as it regarded the intended duel, and the motive which had led to it; and Sydney muſt not be expoſed to a ſhadow of imputation. But to ſecrete a circumſtance, known to ſo many, and poſſibly ſuſpected even by the ſervants of the family—added to its being

being already in Shallow's poſſeſſion, was neither feaſible, nor yet prudent to attempt.

Pride, as well as honour, prevented Beauclaire from acknowledging ſuch an obligation to the friendſhip of Sydney; or, indeed, to that of any man. Elvira could not yield to it from the peculiar delicacy of her ſituation. Under theſe reflections the Colonel adviſed Mrs. Raymond to avoid every thing likely to revive the ſubject; that he would go immediately to Sydney, and, ſhould Beauclaire call before his return, nothing could tranſpire likely to endanger the cauſe.

Mrs. Raymond returned to her dreſſing room, and the Colonel went to Mr. Sydney. Elvira was alone in the drawing room, every moment in expectation of the happy meeting, when Mr. Shallow was announced, who inquired for Mrs. Raymond, whom the ſervant ſuppoſed to be there.

Shallow approached Miſs Mordaunt with much agitation, ſupplicating her pardon for

for the danger to which his imprudence had nearly involved two innocent characters; but that he was happy in aſſuring her no blood had been ſpilt—for that he was recently returned from Lord Beauclaire and Mr. Sydney. That theſe gentlemen had generouſly accepted his apology; and that the report of a duel would be, he flattered himſelf, no other than a feather to a lady whoſe merits were ſo conſpicuous as Miſs Mordaunt's.

Elvira was ſo much alarmed at the word *Duel*, as to be near fainting, when Mrs. Raymond entered the room. He went over the ſame to her, who, in an angry tone, begged to hear no more upon the ſubject. Elvira's feelings were too much awakened to admit of a moment's doubt reſpecting the duel. Her ſoul ſhuddered at the thought, and, raiſing her voice, conjured Mr. Shallow to ſay inſtantly what he meant?—Mrs. Raymond repeatedly aſſured her there was nothing to apprehend.

"No—

"No—Dieu merci! (exclaimed Shallow)—for the piſtols were diſcharged in the air."

Mrs. Raymond's look carried with it a reproof he at length obſerved; and perceiving her diſpleaſure, and Miſs Mordaunt's diſtreſs, took leave.

The myſtery was ſuch as to demand immediate explanation, which was made by Mrs. Raymond in the beſt poſſible manner, and the whole imputed to Shallow's imprudence.

The emotions of Elvira's mind, during the relation, were evidently not in favour of Beauclaire. Suſpicion and jealouſy were diſpoſitions for which ſhe was unprepared; and the imputation levelled againſt her conduct by the public meaſure he had taken to defend it an injury that ſhe felt with the deepeſt anguiſh.

From the dignity of her character, and the ſincerity and exquiſite tenderneſs of her affection, Mrs. Raymond ſenſibly dreaded what ſhe now beheld; but ſtill endeavoured to repreſent the whole ſo as

as to exculpate Beauclaire from the moſt remote ſuſpicion with regard to herſelf—imputing his conduct to that tenacious regard for honour which had been ſo publicly attacked by Shallow's indiſcretion as to require the ſatisfaction thus demanded. Elvira liſtened—but made no reply, and preſently begged to retire.

Mrs. Raymond was acutely hurt, and anxiouſly impatient for the Colonel's return, when a loud and impatient rap at the door, which ſhe thought to be his, followed by ſome one who rather flew than walked up the ſtairs—introduced Beauclaire himſelf. He ran up to Mrs. Raymond, embracing her with all the warmth of friendſhip, and, as ſoon as he could ſpeak, anxiouſly inquired for Elvira; Where was ſhe? He muſt ſee her inſtantly? —and was following Mrs. Raymond to give her the meeting, who begged him to ſtop a moment, and ſhe would bring her. Trembling in every joint, ſhe entered Elvira's apartment, acquainted her Lord Beauclaire was juſt arrived, impatient to

ſee

ſee her, and entreated her to give him the moſt friendly reception. Her countenance changed; but ſhe ſtood fixed as a ſtatue.

"For Heaven ſake receive him, or he will go wild!—Do, my lovely child, forget all you have heard—it is injurious to his honour, as well as your own, to ſuffer yourſelf to be influenced by momentary prejudice."

"Impoſſible! (replied Elvira); I cannot ſee him!"

At this moment a ſervant came to ſay Lord Beauclaire begged to be admitted.

"Coming down;" and again urged her by the moſt endearing kindneſs to accompany her inſtantly, and receive him as he juſtly deſerved. Here came a ſecond meſſange, when Mrs. Raymond, finding that all her wiſhes and entreaties would have no effect, returned alone.

Beauclaire had advanced ſome ſteps up the ſtairs: not ſeeing Elvira, and obſerving Mrs. Raymond's countenance, exclaimed, "Is ſhe dead?"—To which no anſwer being made, concluded ſhe was; for

for that nothing, except death, could prevent her receiving him, and was haſtening out of the room to aſcertain the fact, when Mrs. Raymond aſſured him ſhe was in good health, but her ſpirits too oppreſſed to admit of an interview at preſent.

Imputing this agitation to her great ſenſibility, and the ſudden manner in which ſhe had been ſurpriſed, was eaſily appeaſed, though heavily diſappointed; and watching his friend's anxious looks, ſaid, "he would not detain her from their dear Elvira, but come again at five," and took leave.

His Lordſhip had been gone but a few minutes when the Colonel returned, to whom Mrs. Raymond mentioned what had happened. Elvira's judgment of this affair ſo entirely met his own, that in confidence to Mrs. Raymond, he frankly acknowledged he thought her right, for that Beauclaire's impetuous temper demanded gentle reſtraint. He did not wiſh one particle of his ſpirit leſs animated; only a little under control. He was a fine, noble, generous fellow,

fellow, but in the late affair highly reprehenſible. He adviſed Mrs. Raymond to urge an interview, as it could not take place till he had ſeen Beauclaire, with whom he had an appointment in leſs than an hour.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVI.

WHEN the Colonel, by Mr. Sydney's permiſſion, entered into a full explanation with Beauclaire on his conduct ſubſequent to the death of Sir Charles, with his own remarks and obſervations upon the laudable motives by which this diſintereſted meaſure had been purſued, every ſentiment of eſteem and friendſhip took poſſeſſion of his mind: it was an act of magnanimity that deſerved, and received the higheſt admiration and reſpect: and as the ſame was not known to Elvira, as to Mr. Sydney's perſonal regard, ſo far from exciting jealouſy, or miſtruſt on his part, he aſſured the Colonel, with the moſt candid earneſtneſs, that the man who was directed by ſuch noble principles, ſuch liberal

liberal ſentiments, he ſhould feel his higheſt pride in being conſidered by him as a friend: and if the Colonel were diſengaged, he would immediately accompany him to Mr. Sydney. This was agreed to.

Beauclaire, with whom Mr. Sydney had been wholly unacquainted till the meeting in Hyde Park, addreſſed him with ſuch frankneſs, judgment, and good ſenſe, without any attempt to excuſe himſelf for his late raſh, unprecedented impetuoſity: that Sydney could barely lament the circumſtance, which had brought to his knowledge ſuch an eſtimable character: and in order to do away every impreſſion of raſhneſs and violence, replied, that he not only admired, but revered the action, as the very ſtep he himſelf ſhould have taken under a like injury. The deed of gift was generouſly acknowledged, but inſtantly cancelled.

Beauclaire was ſhortly after for taking leave: but the Colonel wiſhed to detain him, and prevail on him to join him and his friends Sydney and D'Arcy to dinner at

at the Cocoa-tree. His Lordſhip heſitated a moment—" It is my wiſh ſo to do, (looking at his watch), but I have not yet ſeen every member of your family, Colonel. But you will be too late; it is now paſt five—But I am expected. To ſet you right, Mrs. Raymond commiſſioned me to engage you to breakfaſt to-morrow." Beauclaire took the hint, and promiſed to meet them in half an hour. In the interval he went to Berkeley Square; but orders had been given at three o'clock, that no more morning viſitors was to be admitted. Little ſuſpecting the real motive of Elvira's conduct, he imputed it as before, to the moſt flattering partiality a lover could experience.

The Colonel returned by eleven o'clock, his ſpirits rather exhilirated by wine; but his judgment nearly as ſound as it ought to have been on a like occaſion. The day had paſſed in ſuch harmony and convivial converſation, that Shallow's diſcovery had wholly eſcaped his recollection. Poor Mrs. Raymond, whoſe thoughts had never been

been diverted from that point, eagerly enquired what Beauclaire had ſaid?

"Many good things," replied the Colonel.

"Yes! but the duel?" ſaid Mrs. Raymond.

"What duel, my dear?"

Here perceiving ſhe muſt venture no farther, liſtened to what her companion had to ſay.—

"We have drank to their nuptials," ſaid he, "in the beſt Champaigne which could be procured—Beauclaire is a noble fellow; he takes her without a ſixpence:—perſonal merit her whole inheritance. Egad, and enough to. But where is ſhe? She ſhall know it this evening."

"Elvira is gone to bed."

"Well, then you ſhall introduce me."

"But, my dear Colonel, ſhe is unwell."

"The very reaſon ſhe ſhould know it. Such glad tidings will do her more good than all your pity; and to-morrow ſhe is to be married."

"To-morrow, my dear?"

"And why not to-morrow?—But now I think on it, it is to-morrow fortnight. The deed of gift has been cancelled; yes, cancelled by Beauclaire.—But Elvira muſt not know that ſuch a thing ever took place."

"Certainly not," replied Mrs. Raymond.

The Colonel gave a nod, and preſently fell aſleep; when ſhe gently rang the bell, the ſignal for chamber candles, and the ſervants coming in, waked him. At that moment he only thought of going to reſt, and nothing more paſſed upon the ſubject.

In the morning he gave Mrs. Raymond particulars of the preceding day; and that in order to prevent Beauclaire's calling, had put him off by an invitation to breakfaſt. The Colonel was ſtill of opinion, that Elvira had reaſon for her diſpleaſure: but that my Lord Beauclaire's affection for her was ſo diſintereſted, that though a proper ſenſe of ſuch impetuoſity ſhould at leaſt be underſtood, yet, upon the whole, he

he adviſed her to go no farther, for Beauclaire was not to be trifled with: and to avoid giving him the meeting, and a hearty meeting, previous to his and Mrs. Raymond's appearance in the breakfaſt parlour, was what no friend would adviſe.

Mrs. Raymond went to her chamber for this purpoſe; when to her no ſmall ſhock, as well as aſtoniſhment, Elvira was ſeated in the ſame ſpot in which ſhe had left her the preceding night, from whence it did not appear either by her looks or dreſs ſhe had moved. The writing caſe remained by her upon the table; from which ſhe took a letter, and preſenting it to her friend, requeſted it might be diſpatched as early as poſſible. It was directed, "Lord Viſcount Beauclaire." Mrs. Raymond, though a ſtranger to the contents, readily imagined the ſubject; and with ſtrict obſervance to what the Colonel had ſaid, urged many ſtrong arguments againſt a letter written under ſuch impreſſions. Elvira repeatedly aſſured her there was not a word in it ſhe would diſapprove, and

had left it open for her inſpection. Mrs. Raymond was very unwilling to take the charge of it, and moſt earneſtly preſſed her to accompany her down, and meet Lord Beauclaire with the ſentiments his conſtancy and affection ſo manifeſtly deſerved.

"Pardon me, my dear Madam," replied Elvira, with emotion, "Lord Beauclaire has too evidently renounced his claim to either. Tender as my affection was, and poſſibly is for him, I never loſt ſight of that reſpect to which his merits were entitled; and had I entertained a moment's doubt of his integrity, to his authority alone would I have been indebted for a refutation. The protection, under which I have been ſo honourably ſupported during his abſence, was ſuch as ought to have bid defiance to the breath of calumny. Such teſtimony was in itſelf too ſacred for ſuſpicion; and independent of the perſonal injury I have received, his Lordſhip is yet to learn that I have experienced a far deeper, in the imputation levelled againſt my

my friends. Here a meſſage arrived, that the Colonel and Lord Beauclaire were in the breakfaſt parlour.

Mrs. Raymond very reluctantly went down alone. The Colonel, before Beauclaire had time to ſpeak, enquired for Elvira. Mrs. Raymond was ſilent: Beauclaire ſtood as a ſtatue. At length recovering ſpeech, implored her to tell him inſtantly the cauſe of her abſence. This letter, my Lord, will explain what I am unequal to.

"A letter!" exclaimed Beauclaire. "Refuſe to ſee me! Fly at my approach! Where is the error of which I have been guilty, but what the moſt pure, the moſt ardent paſſion may plead in my excuſe! Her exiſtence is rivetted, is interwoven with my own, and we will either live or die together. Her vow is irrevocable; nor can ſhe diſſolve it, but with her laſt breath."

Mrs. Raymond gently urged him to compoſure.—"It is not poſſible." Here he pauſed.—"Yes, Madam, I can dare at-

tempt all that juſtice, that honour demands; and beyond that I ſeek no refuge. Expectation—hope—love—all are fled—and I am loſt for ever."

During this violent conflict the letter dropped upon the ground, and the Colonel took it up. "Read it, my friend, for I dare not: every word would be a dagger to me." The Colonel haſtened with it out of the room, apprehenſive the contents were not of a nature likely to conſole: but returning with it, he aſſured his friend, that the only blameable part was poſſibly that of loving him too well. This the good Colonel repeated with his uſual ſignal of welcome tidings.

To Lord Viscount Beauclaire.

"Could I have entered with you, my Lord, upon a ſubject of ſuch importance, I ſhould have received you on your firſt viſit.—Even this I tried, but it was not poſſible. There are bounds we attempt to

to paſs, but the exertion ſo enfeebles our powers, as to diſqualify for a ſafe return.

"The report of a duel (which was upon the point of taking place between your Lordſhip and Mr. Sydney), came to my knowledge by accident: but I little ſuppoſed myſelf the object of it. I applied to Mrs. Raymond for an explanation, who with kind reluctance complied, at length, with my requeſt. The motive which directed this barbarous redreſs I have ſtill to learn: but as it was meant to me, I am the perſon it immediately concerns. Had I deſerted you, and given my affections to another, you might have been juſtified by your reſentment, could ſuch a deed have merited a thought more. But what is it I have left in your power to accuſe me of, except that, if it were poſſible, of loving you too well? Under whoſe ſanction were my vows confirmed? The integrity and honour of two friends, to whom I owe every obligation! Had I ſtood ſingly, expoſed to your injuſtice, the conſciouſneſs

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of innocence would have repelled your attack. Did I not acknowledge myſelf your's by every tie which Heaven could bind?—My heart was the hoſtage I left in your poſſeſſion, till I had fully diſcharged my engagement. And will you now force me to ranſom it, at a price I cannot willingly pay? Ungenerous Beauclaire!—Is this the reward of all my tenderneſs?—to have my honour publicly conteſted, and that of my friends as publicly defied. I am ſorry to ſay you have a difficult leſſon to learn, when you are ſo little prepared for inſtruction.

"You oppoſe truth by error, and honour by paſſion.—By the ingenuity of argument you may diſplay their ſeparate merits; but I am diſpoſed to think, whenever you ſhall reduce ſuch principles to experience, you will find that all your rhetoric has anſwered but little purpoſe. Erroneous principles claim our pity, but pernicious maxims our contempt. The former may take place in a good heart, and unconſciouſly lead it aſtray; but the latter

latter is a preſumptuous, arbitrary power, which, in defiance of eſtabliſhed laws, boldly advances its own authority, and has more influence on the conduct of life than we may apprehend. It goes to my ſoul, my dear Beauclaire, to addreſs you in language ſuch as this; but you have forcibly drawn it from me.

"When I ſo repeatedly aſſured you of my affection, why would you entertain a moment's doubt of its ſincerity? and by a raſh, ungovernable impetuoſity, expoſe both yourſelf and your neareſt and deareſt friends to eternal deſtruction.

"If you will allow me to judge of your heart, I think I may adviſe you to go no farther than that ſhall teach.

"But if you ſhut your eyes againſt conviction, impute not to reaſon an error ſhe manifeſtly diſapproves.—But that prudential friend is, in general, ſo tardy in her approach, that ſhe rarely comes to our aſſiſtance, without much importunity. The cauſe that we intreat her ſo ſeldom, and reſpect her ſo much.

"I am fully ſenſible, my Lord, that my attachment to you cannot be diſſolved, but by many an agoniſing pang: but as temper is either the bane or bliſs of domeſtic life, allow me to make this obſervation, that unleſs you give a watchful attention to a fault, which by a late inſtance I am concerned to ſee has gained ſo powerful an aſcendancy; the many virtues, and great qualities you poſſeſs, will be no counterbalance againſt the evils, to which you muſt be daily expoſed.

"Examine this ſubject well—let us not involve ourſelves in a misfortune, for which there may be no redreſs. Were my affections leſs tender, I ſhould not ſay what I do; but from a knowledge of my own heart I wiſh not to engage, where I have neither ſtrength nor reſolution to contend.

"So much have I already ſuffered under the various and unfortunate oppoſition of circumſtances, that hope ſhould be no longer held out to me, unleſs ſupported by a probability of ſucceſs. Speak to me candidly

candidly—let me not deceive myſelf—and do it calmly on the receipt of this letter. A ſtate of painful ſuſpenſe may be endured for a time, as long as it will admit of moments of eaſe: but when that conſolation is loſt, it is fit a misfortune ſhould be repreſented, ſuch as it will be found. The mind is much better able to recover its fortitude, after one violent ſtruggle, than when it has been debilitated by a long and continued oppreſſion. Many a future comfort may be adminiſtered when the worſt is known, to alleviate reflection, and ſooth calamity. But the contention between ardent expectation and mournful ſolicitude leaves every faculty ſo enfeebled, that in many inſtances the general tone of thought has been wholly deſtroyed.

"Were the heart and diſpoſition rightly conſidered, many a ſorrow might be prevented; but we are as apt to refine upon the diſtreſſes of human life, as we do upon its amuſements, and aggravate real miſery

by ſome ingenious experiment for its relief.

"I ſpeak as I think, without apologiſing for any previous opinion. You are well convinced, my Lord, how truly this event will contribute to my happineſs.—Your reply will decide on this important queſtion; and be the event what it may, I am prepared.

"ELVIRA MORDAUNT."

Beauclaire was never more ſenſible of the goodneſs of her heart, and force of her attachment, than upon reading the above; and returning into the breakfaſt room with a countenance expreſſive of every warm and generous emotion, preſented the letter to Mrs. Raymond, and went back to the library to diſpatch an anſwer.

There was not a line in it that either the Colonel or Mrs. Raymond diſapproved.—On the contrary, they admired the ſpirit and delicacy which breathed through the whole;

whole; and had no doubt but that a reproof, directed by ſuch motives, and enforced by juſt arguments, would have every weight with a man of Beauclaire's generous temper.

ANSWER.

"My pen trembles in my hand! How many times have I taken it up, without the power of directing it towards you.—Yes, Elvira! to you, and you alone will I be indebted for my reformation! Your candid, noble ſentiments, have ſtamped conviction on my ſoul. I feel my fault with the deepeſt anguiſh: the horror of the deed, and the injuſtice and injury you have committed, never can be atoned for, by any arguments I could offer in my defence. I therefore, my lovely friend, plead guilty in the deepeſt ſenſe, and will ſteadily endeavour to conquer, what I cannot reflect upon but with agoniſing pangs—leſs than the conditions you offer would not,

I frankly

I frankly acknowledge, have been readily accepted, though I eſtimate their value before every earthly bleſſing. It is you, my Elvira, who make life an object of my ambition, who ſtimulate to virtue, who inſpire every ſentiment which dignifies humanity. Can I contemplate your angelic form, and not feel every diſcordant paſſion ſink within me? You point the way I am to go, and are my polar ſtar to guide my motions, to direct me into a ſure latitude, and bring me at length ſafe into harbour. Oh, Elvira! what do I not owe you for this laſt tribute of your affection: as a charm, it diffuſes its influence through every future path, and makes the paſt ſorrows of life appear but as a dream. But why, my lovely friend, being ſo confident of your own ſtrength, could you refuſe me the conſolation of ſeeing you? You could but have ſaid what you have written, and I ſhould at leaſt have had the pleaſure of hearing your voice.

" Pardon me, but did not your refuſal ariſe from what pride would not ſuffer you

to

to allow? Was it not cowardice, rather than reſolution, which drew you back? Is not this the diſtinction you taught me? I attempted not to fly; but would have been vain of my defeat, in acknowledging you my conqueror, and am ſo ſtill, though you fought at a diſtance. But each word I write robs me of ſo much precious time, withholds me from your preſence, and makes me ſtill dread further danger.

"With the moſt anxious impatience I wait your ſummons, and never ſhall you repent, what you have conferred on,

"Your faithful and affectionate

"BEAUCLAIRE."

CHAP.

CHAP. XVII.

THE meeting between Beauclaire and Elvira took place about an hour after the receipt of his letter: but as it cannot be deſcribed by any language ſuitable to the occaſion, the reader is wholly left, as in former inſtances, to her imagination.

They both appeared at dinner with the party; the Colonel had invited on the preceding day Major D'Arcy, who had never ſeen Elvira, and heartily congratulated Beauclaire upon his choice: whether Elvira heard it or not, avails little; for as the honeſt and joyful looks of every one preſent expreſſed this and much more, Elvira was more intent upon her own behaviour, than in remarking that of her friends.

The

The Earl and Mr. H. being met by the meſſenger at Dartford with Beauclaire's letter, arrived in town in good ſpirits, and were welcomed by his Lordſhip, after his firſt interview with Elvira.

Every arrangement was now making, preparatory to the nuptials: and the beſt ſettlement which could be made, under mortgages and other incumbrances, was done. Elvira begged not even to be conſulted upon the ſubject, confident of every proper attention from his Lordſhip and the Earl. By this generous conduct, the diſappointment of her fortune was kept from her knowledge. The following Thurſday was fixed for their marriage. The reader will remember ſhe had not a ſous; but the Earl's liberal temper, as well as his ſon's, prevented them regretting this circumſtance, even to each other.

On the Saturday preceding their intended nuptials, Elvira was ſurpriſed by a viſit from Dr. ——, in conſequence of his being called in to a French lady, lately arrived from Paris, whoſe recovery he thought very

very doubtful. The lady was too ill to write, and being attended only by French ſervants, he had found ſome difficulty in procuring a direction to ſome part of her family, though he could not prevail ſo far as to get the lady's own name. She expreſſed, through her confeſſor, a very earneſt wiſh to ſee Miſs Mordaunt, her late huſband's niece; and the prieſt enforced this wiſh with much intreaty.

Certain as to the perſon, Elvira, with Mrs. Raymond, propoſed accompanying the Doctor to his patient. The former, attended by him, went to Lady Luſignan's apartment, where ſhe was to all appearance in the laſt agonies of death; but on ſeeing Elvira, ſhe looked more compoſed; and preſſing her hand, caſt an anxious look on her confeſſor. The piety of his countenance, and manner, ſtruck Elvira very forcibly: when turning from his dying penitent, he took from the table a paper ſealed, and directed to Miſs Mordaunt, and preſented it to her. She held it in her hand, watching in awful expectation the convulſed

convulſed and agitated features of this ghaſtly form. She endeavoured to ſpeak, but for ſome moments her words were too indiſtinct to be heard. Feeling her death approaching, ſhe made one effort more, and ſaid, with much eagerneſs, that Father St. Pierre would not grant her abſolution, but upon the conditions expreſſed in that paper: that her repentance was ſincere, and Heaven would receive, ſhe truſted, her expiring petition. She then ſunk upon her pillow, and breathed her laſt.

Elvira, whoſe tender feelings had been ſo ſtrongly moved by the contrition of the deceaſed, was ſupported down to Mrs. Raymond.

The impreſſion of a ſcene, ſuch as this, preſently wore off.—Humanity and pity had been excited; but Elvira had too much ſincerity to expreſs an affliction ſhe did not feel. She, with Mrs. Raymond, left the houſe; the latter having given every neceſſary direction, and promiſed immediately to ſend a confidential perſon to remain till the funeral ſhould be over.

She

She alſo invited St. Pierre to go back with her: but this kind offer was declined for the preſent.

Mrs. Raymond, though ardently impatient to know the contents, yet ſeconded Elvira's propoſal of leaving that welcome office, of breaking the ſeal, &c. &c. to the Colonel and Lord Beauclaire. This was not long delayed; and to the no ſmall ſatisfaction of the former, Elvira was left heireſs of three thouſand a year. The moiety of the eſtates, and the perſonality were divided among Lady Luſignan's poor relations; but no tribute of gratitude to St. Pierre. The laſt circumſtance too evidently betrayed the real ſtate of the teſtator's mind; and that her liberality to Elvira had been extorted from fear: for had ſhe felt any part of the contrition ſhe expreſſed, St. Pierre's recompence would have been in proportion. This omiſſion was amply compenſated for by Elvira, in a good income for life.

Further ſecreſy with regard to the former ſuppoſed legacy was now unneceſſary: and

and by explaining particulars, an additional luſtre would be thrown on Beauclaire's character, and give the ſtrongeſt poſſible proof of his diſintereſted attachment. Elvira received the intelligence with the moſt lively ſentiments of gratitude, and the benevolent Colonel felt no leſs ſatisfaction in being the bearer of ſuch glad tidings.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVIII.

THE death of Sir Anthony Shrewd happened about this time. The Colonel had made many attempts at finding him ſince his return to England, but to no purpoſe. Indeed, the caution he had long obſerved, in order to conceal his reſidence, defeated the wiſhes and endeavours of his friends in tracing him home. The motive which rendered this attention ſo neceſſary aroſe from apprehenſions, that to his extreme frugality he would in the end fall a ſacrifice, which was the caſe.

He had been ſeen by Major D'Arcy about a fortnight before, in a bye ſtreet near Portman Square; who, judging from his feeble gait, and emaciated figure, that he muſt be lodged near, had made many and repeated enquiries if ſuch a perſon

had been ſeen, deſcribing his preſent appearance: but for more than twelve days every ſearch proved ineffectual. At that time he was informed ſuch a perſon had been obſerved going into a houſe, ſuppoſed to be uninhabited. The Major took a friend with him, and went as directed; but admittance was not to be procured: they ſent for a ſmith to break open the door, but reflecting on the diſturbance and buſtle which might be occaſioned by ſuch a ſtep, determined on going immediately to a relation of Sir Anthony's, and conſult with him as to the meaſure proper to be taken.

The gentleman was out of town, nor expected till the following day. The Major left a ſervant of his own to watch the door; with a ſtrict injunction to follow the perſon, as before deſcribed, ſhould he be ſeen coming out of the houſe: or, if going in, to ſend a porter to him with intelligence, but to remain himſelf at his poſt. Sir Anthony did not appear. The Major now determined boldly to force his

way

way in; perſuaded this unfortunate man muſt be either too ill to go out, or dead.

A light was procured—the Major and and his ſervant entered the parlours, and every apartment, till they came to a back garret; all of which were unfurniſhed. As they entered this room they heard a deep hollow groan; and, on approaching a wretched broken bedſtead, without furniture or covering, ſaw a figure extended, dreſſed, with a hat and boots on, and a walking ſtick in the right hand. On advancing the candle near to the face, the Major thought he perceived the eye-lids move, and diſpatched his ſervant to the apothecary neareſt for aſſiſtance. A vein was opened, but to no purpoſe. The body had been dead more than half an hour, the time which had elapſed ſince the Major entered the room. A meſſage was now ſent off to the relation of the deceaſed before-mentioned. The account appeared to him incredible, as he believed his uncle to be, at this very time, in the country,

try, where he had parted from him, in good health, not a week before.

The cauſe of this death could only be conjectured from the meagre aſpect of the corpſe. The whole frame appeared waſted away, for want of natural ſuſtenance. The relation confirmed this melancholy ſuppoſition; but it was not a ſubject to be diſcuſſed. Sir Anthony was long known to have deprived himſelf of the common neceſſaries of exiſtence; and the unwholeſome food he would frequently take, in order to ſave what he deemed ſuperfluities, had corrupted his whole maſs of blood.

Money and notes were found about him to the amount of two thouſand pounds, though in the houſe were neither coals, nor yet proviſions of any kind; nor did a trace remain of its having been an human habitation.

Such was the wretched cataſtrophe of a ſtory, poſſibly as extraordinary as any one in the annals of hiſtory. But no circumſtance has been mentioned, or heightened, to excite either the aſtoniſh-

ment or pity of mankind. Many witneſſes ſtill living bear teſtimony to every part of the character.

It is not poſſible to reflect on the eminent and diſtinguiſhed virtues and talents of this unfortunate man, without the higheſt deference, eſteem, and affection; and yet, for the dignity of human nature, it is almoſt to be wiſhed they had never been known; for it exhibits a ſad picture of infirmity and ſtrength — every thing great and noble in man united to a foible, which excited the moſt awful pity and humiliating diſtreſs.

Shallow's tender commiſeration for Sir Anthony reflects honour upon his heart, and would almoſt diſpoſe one to think leſs ſevere of him in many former parts of his conduct. It appeared by ſcraps of letters found in his pockets, and among the papers of the deceaſed, that he had, for the laſt year, regularly ſupplied his wants by proviſions of every kind, and linen, ſtill unpacked, to a conſiderable quantity.

Lady

Lady Hartley having received intelligence from Mrs. Raymond of the approaching nuptials, haſtened to town in order to be preſent on the occaſion.—Major D'Arcy had long caſt a friendly glance at her ladyſhip's good qualities, and poſſibly did not wholly diſregard the worldly appendages thereunto belonging; and her ladyſhip's age being equally adapted to love, or friendſhip, the Major was left to his choice. But as it happened that every intermediate ſenſation between buſineſs and pleaſure had long been devoted to the uſe of his friends, love he found to be the only paſſion wholly at his diſpoſal.

The Major had long been convinced that a bachelor's life had all the expences of matrimony, without the credit of it; and that his reputation depended on chance as the frowns or ſmiles of a faſhionable circle, after a certain period, determines future fortune.

Feeling neither taſte, nor yet inclination for ſuch precarious objects, which, by

this time, had gradually loſt their influence, Lady Hartley appeared the very woman ſure of ſecuring to him rational felicity, and, at the ſame time, of giving him that favourable reception by the more amiable part of the ſex, who, hitherto, looked ſhy whenever the Major advanced. For the laſt twenty years back he had been known only under the appellation of what is commonly called a gay man; whether really ſuch, or not, imagination muſt dive for.

His manners were queſtionable; but his looks in the affirmative, with a compliment ready for every female figure he chance to behold, and his inflexible good nature never failing to diſcover ſome attraction unknown to the poſſeſſor, who, being too well pleaſed with his words to go in queſt of his judgment, was poſſibly what gave him ſuch unbounded credit in the circle of his acquaintance. His liſt of female friends, at this time, amounted to twenty-eight — not by the Major's calculation, for the world ſpared him that trouble,

trouble, and, indeed, many others by the liberality of its favours.

Now a ſecret rumour had long prevailed that the Major was married; but whether within or without the pale of the church was the query. He moſt certainly gave broad hints upon the ſubject: ſtill a ſort of paradoxical confuſion left the hearer in the dark. Averſe to wedlock by ſpeculation, and to a ſingle life from ſyſtem — but yet a free thinker in both, at the age of fifty he ſat out in ſearch of a wife.

Lady Hartley gave a fair and impartial reading to a doctrine ſhe had heard ſo highly diſapproved, and acknowledged to herſelf, there was a certain perplexity, both in thought and expreſſion, which nothing leſs than the Major's own comments could poſſibly ſet right. At this moment he fortunately came in, and his animadverſions were ſuch as produced immediate conviction.

Every other preliminary being ſettled, the Colonel, a great enemy to unneceſſary

delay, adviſed both parties to celebrate their nuptials at the ſame time; when a circumſtance happened, which affected Elvira ſo ſenſibly, that his wiſhes could not be ſo immediately complied with.—The reader will pleaſe to recollect, that Mrs. Beaulieu, Elvira's old friend, had one ſon, whoſe extravagance had involved both himſelf and his mother in very ſerious diſtreſs. Mr. Beaulieu reſided at Granville ſeveral months before Elvira left it, and the deep impreſſion ſhe had made on his heart effaced every former attachment; ſoothed by the vain hope of attracting her attention, he renounced every purſuit likely to prove an obſtacle to its ſucceſs.

His figure and manners were equally elegant; he had lived wholly in faſhionable life, and, with an income of two hundred pounds, indulged himſelf in every expenſive pleaſure. His debts obliged him frequently to have recourſe to money brokers, in order to ſilence, for a time, the importunities of his creditors. But this, and every other expedient, had long ſince been exhauſted.

exhauſted. Deſperation was now his only ſuccour: but this reſolution did not take place till ſome time after Elvira had been at Kelſborough. Upon her quitting Granville he ſolicited permiſſion occaſionally to write to her. Elvira, who ſaw no objection to a compliance with this requeſt, readily granted it. For, as his whole deportment to her had been marked by the ſtricteſt propriety and good breeding, perſonal regard never once entered her thoughts: but the ſtile of his letters ſoon determined her to break off the correſpondence. His anſwers were conveyed open through his mother; yet, as it was too evident from the ſentiments and expreſſions of her ſon that ſhe was a ſtranger to the contents, Elvira made a full ſtop.

Mr. Beaulieu ſtill perſevered, when ſhe perceived a wildneſs of thought, ſo different from his former letters, that ſhe ſeriouſly apprehended all was not right. A conſiderable time had now elapſed ſince ſhe had heard of him; Mrs. Beaulieu never mentioned his name, though a frequeut in-

tercourſe was ſtill kept open between her and her young friend.

During the mournful ſolicitude of Elvira's mind reſpecting Lord Beauclaire's ſilence, ſhe would ſtand at the window for hours watching the arrival of the poſtman, and when ſhe has ſeen him paſs would turn away with a look of the moſt awful dejection: but one morning as ſhe obſerved him coming towards the door, ſhe haſtened out of the room to meet her letter; but finding he had not knocked, ſhe ran as quickly back, and gently threw up the ſaſh, when a perſon reclining upon the iron rails, apparently for ſupport, inſtantly engaged her attention. He caſt his eyes towards Elvira with a countenance full of grief and horror, then putting his hand into his pocket, he drew forth a letter, and made many endeavours to preſent it to her, looking cautiouſly about as if fearful of being obſerved.

Elvira's compaſſion was powerfully excited, and convinced that nothing leſs than the moſt urgent diſtreſs could have induced

induced ſuch a mode of application; ſhe rolled five guineas in a paper, and dropped it into his hand, at the ſame time retiring from the window; but preſently caſting an anxious look, unperceived as ſhe thought, ſhe diſcovered that his eye was rivetted to the ſame ſpot. At this moment ſome gentlemen walking towards the Colonel's houſe, talking rather loud, diſturbed his contemplation, and he croſſed the ſquare with all the expedition he was able.

Elvira thought herſelf highly blameable in ſuffering the ſtranger to go away before ſhe knew the contents of his paper. She had no doubt of its being a petition, or ſomething to that effect; but five guineas could adminiſter but little to his diſtreſs, and his afflictions might be of a nature to require other than pecuniary relief. She went ſeveral days about the ſame hour to look for him, but, as he never afterwards appeared, ſhe conſoled herſelf with the reflection, that his purpoſe was anſwered, and that the ſubject of his paper had been wholly confined to a temporary inconve-

nience, which ſhe was happy to think ſhe had alleviated.

About a fortnight ſubſequent to this event, the Colonel and Lord Beauclaire were returning to town from Hatfield, and juſt as they reached Finchley Common a heavy ſtorm of wind and hail made them quicken their pace, and diſpatch the ſervant forward to Highgate to order a poſt chaiſe. A few minutes after they were attacked by a highwayman, who advanced furiouſly towards them, and ſternly demanded their money, which being refuſed, he demanded a ſecond time, but in a tone of voice ſo different from what was uſual in like caſes, that each gave him a few guineas. His face was ſo muffled, that to ſee him was not poſſible: when thanking the gentlemen with much humility, adding that he had never before made a like attempt, &c. he rode off with redoubled rapidity. The ſtile of his approach did not carry with it any ſtriking proof of timidity, and the pretext of poverty having been found ſo ſucceſsful among this race of

deſperadoes,

deſperadoes, the ſubject was never afterwards mentioned.

About a fortnight had elapſed ſince the foregoing event, when a meſſage was brought to Miſs Mordaunt, ſignifying there was a perſon below who begged to ſpeak to her. She inſtantly roſe for that purpoſe, when Lord Beauclaire deſired ſhe would ſtop a few minutes, and inquired of the ſervant who the perſon came from. He replied, that he had aſked ſeveral times, but could obtain no other anſwer than the meſſage he had juſt delivered. His Lordſhip went down, and ordered that the perſon might be ſhewn into the library. It was an elderly woman, whoſe addreſs and appearance correſponded ſo little, that Lord Beauclaire was ſorry he had not left her to execute her commiſſion in the manner moſt agreeable to her. She acquainted him ſhe came from a gentleman too ill to expreſs his wiſhes but by a verbal meſſage; but Miſs Mordaunt was the perſon to whom they were addreſſed. His Lordſhip went back to Elvira, who accompanied him to

the woman; ſhe begged to be permitted ſpeaking to her alone, when ſhe informed her ſhe came from Mr. Beaulieu, whoſe diſorder had long ſince been pronounced incurable, and, feeling his death approaching, earneſtly ſolicited to take his laſt farewel of a friend to whom his family owed ſo many obligations.

Elvira deſired to know to whom ſhe was indebted for this melancholy intelligence, and that ſhe would inſtantly comply with the requeſt.—The woman replied, ſhe was a perſon now in the moſt indigent condition, but, hearing of the illneſs of this young gentleman, apparently unknown to any one, and inhumanly treated by the people where he lodged, ſhe had intruded upon his retirement to offer her own aſſiſtance; but he was in the laſt ſtage of a conſumption, and in want of thoſe neceſſary comforts ſhe had it not in her power to beſtow; that to ſee him gradually waſte away, and ſink under the preſſure of poverty, added to many other afflictions with which his mind ſeemed too deeply

deeply oppreſſed, was a reflection to which ſhe could not yield; and if there were any thing wrong in the ſtep ſhe had taken, the blame was wholly her own, for the gentleman did not conſent to it till after repeated ſolicitations.

Elvira haſtened out of the room to Lord Beauclaire, who oppoſed her making a viſit, which, he feared, would not ſo effectually relieve the unhappy ſufferer as a ſum of money, which he would undertake to deliver, and any meſſage ſhe thought proper to ſend. It never once occurred to his Lordſhip, that this very man was his old college acquaintance.

Mr. Beaulieu, notwithſtanding all his irregular purſuits, was a young man of good underſtanding and refined ſentiments. His tender paſſion for Elvira, as long as he could flatter himſelf with hope, ſoothed his diſordered mind, and enabled him to reſiſt every temptation which his diſſipated companions would ſtill preſent to him: but, from the moment he perceived his wiſhes were diſappointed, and his letters diſregarded,

diſregarded, he not only relapſed into all his former errors with redoubled impetuoſity, but, from that period, his faculties were evidently deranged, and months frequently intervened without any knowledge where or how he was ſupported. He had ſtrong intervals of reaſon, when the keenneſs of reflection would bring on ſuch violent emotions as preſently exhauſted his feeble frame, and ſunk his ſpirits into ſullen melancholy. This conflict had long ſince ceaſed, and when his diſorder was pronounced incurable his mind appeared perfectly calm. Under this conviction he felt himſelf equal to a laſt farewel of an object, whoſe remembrance ſtill alleviated many an agoniſing pang, and who unconſciouſly had been the happy means of relieving him from an exiſtence too wretched to ſuſtain.

The meſſenger, followed by his Lordſhip, gently entered the room; the latter kept out of ſight, thinking the ſudden appearance of a ſtranger might increaſe diſtreſs. On being informed that Miſs Mordaunt

daunt was not come, the poor man fetched a deep ſigh——

"I had no claim to ſuch an attention, (ſaid he), and muſt die without having my laſt wiſh complied with!—Did ſhe but know what I have to diſcloſe, humanity and pity would ſtill have pleaded in my behalf?"

The good woman aſſured him the lady had expreſſed the moſt feeling concern, and deſired a gentleman, who was with her, to viſit him inſtantly.

"But he is not here?" ſaid Beaulieu, endeavouring to raiſe his head from the pillow.

"Yes, Sir! and begged me to aſſure you of every friendly aſſiſtance from himſelf and Miſs Mordaunt."

"Who is he?—not Colonel Raymond, or Lord Beauclaire?"

Here his Lordſhip approached the bed, and whiſpered in a gentle accent, "It is the latter!"

"Then I am ruined for ever!"—He concealed his face by the clothes, but the deep convulſed groans he heaved, and the violent

violent agitation of his whole frame, made his Lordſhip dread he was in the agonies of death.

At this moment the phyſician arrived whom Elvira had immediately ſent to, by whoſe humane endeavours his patient was preſently compoſed; but he could not be prevailed with either to look on or ſpeak to Lord Beauclaire. His Lordſhip preſſed his hand, into which he put a bank note, and aſſured him that Miſs Mordaunt ſhould be with him in leſs than an hour.

"Impoſſible, my Lord!" attempting to catch his hand, which he had quickly withdrawn, and left the room.

He gave the note to his phyſician, conjuring him to follow his Lordſhip, and return it with thanks; but the good woman whiſpered, "it muſt be accepted, for poverty had reduced him to his preſent condition, and nothing leſs than the moſt urgent neceſſity could have induced this unfortunate man to make the application he had done."

The

The phyſician continued with his patient, waiting Miſs Mordaunt's arrival, who, in the interval, had taken a reviving cordial.

In leſs than a hour ſhe came: when Beaulieu heard the carriage ſtop, he raiſed his head, and, apologiſing to Dr. R—— for his requeſt, begged they might be left together for a ſhort time. This was promiſed on conditions that he would be calm and compoſed, and defer, till the next interview, every ſubject likely to recal painful recollection.

Dr. R—— haſtened to give Miſs Mordaunt the meeting, acquainting her with his patient's requeſt, and his preſent ſituation, ſaying, he would not leave the houſe till ſhe came down.

When Elvira entered the room, he moved the curtain as well as he was able ſo that he might inſtantly ſee her. For ſome minutes they were ſilent, then, raiſing his tremulous voice, endeavoured to ſpeak, which he at length effected, but in ſuch a broken interrupted accent, that ſhe could not

not diſtinguiſh his words, and tenderly urged him to compoſure; aſſuring him he ſtill retained her moſt friendly remembrance, and that ſhe would do every thing in her power to promote his future eaſe, if Dr. R—— found him a tractable patient. That to be reſtored to friends, who valued and eſteemed him, was a ſatisfaction he muſt not diſturb; that Colonel Raymond had enjoined----------. A deep bluſh here overſpread his countenance------

"A name, (ſaid he, interrupting her), which I cannot hear but with horror!"

"Be more tranquil, my friend, and tell me why the name of ſo worthy a character ſhould excite ſuch emotion?"

He here very diſtinctly related the robbery he had committed on him and Lord Beauclaire; and added, that to her benevolence was he indebted for this information.

Elvira, aſtoniſhed at what ſhe heard, humanely imputed his laſt obſervation to a diſordered brain, and was turning to ſome

ſome other ſubject, but the remainder of his narrative fully convinced her of the fact.

Here the ſtrongeſt compunctions immediately followed.------

"Had Heaven (ſaid he) never opened to me the book of fate, and were death the laſt conflict of the wretched ſinner, many a diſquietude would ceaſe!—Could I conſign recollection to oblivion, ſorrow would loſe its ſting!...But the comparative view of what I now am, with what I once was, tortures every vital power, and leaves me dead to conſolation!"

Elvira was ſenſibly affected, and endeavoured to ſilence every painful reflection; but he enjoined her to give him the hearing of a few minutes more.-----

"I have little to add, but that little muſt not be withheld from you.....Yes, Miſs Mordaunt, I preſumed to hope, to aſpire to the perfections of a woman to whom my heart had long been tenderly attached; nor till I loſt my reaſon was I convinced of my error. In the awful intervals

tervals of madneſs ſhe alone was ſtill preſent to my tortured imagination. I exerted every effort to ſubdue, to counteract a paſſion interwoven with my exiſtence; but the attempt was beyond my ſtrength. The life I have ſince led has not produced the reformation I hoped.

" To examine the ſource of evil, when it is to be traced but to our own heart, might ſeem an eaſy taſk: but having carefully examined the different windings of the paſſions, I return to myſelf with leſs conviction than I ſat out. But I have learned this truth, that ſuch as make open war againſt us give time for defence---------." He pauſed, and caſting his eye upon her ſtreaming with tears, ſaid, with much earneſtneſs——" To a mind ſo well diſpoſed as yours, Madam, this retroſpect may not have been neceſſary; but a ſerious inveſtigation of the conduct of mankind, and the evils to which its infirmities render us liable, is a leſſon which can never be a burden to virtue. To conceal the miſeries of wilful error is neither

ther prudent nor merciful. There are duties we owe to others, which cannot, with impunity, be unfringed.

" But you little know the wretch on whom your benevolence was conferred—it was Beaulieu himſelf, who, for five long lingering days, had been watching under your windows, ſoothed by the hope of ſeeing you once more, of offering to your humane peruſal what I have now expreſſed, and with a parting look, and a mind intent on you alone, of launching from life into eternity!"

Dr. R———, apprehenſive from the length of this viſit, that his preſence might be a relief to both, entered the room, and his patient appeared in ſtrong convulſions. He conjured Miſs Mordaunt to leave the houſe, promiſing to call in Berkeley Square as ſoon as poſſible. She rather tottered than walked down the ſtairs, when ſhe was met by the elderly woman, into whoſe hand ſhe put her purſe, aſſuring her that her humanity, and care of this unfortunate

unfortunate young gentleman, ſhould receive the moſt grateful remembrance.

Lord Beauclaire's friendſhip for Beaulieu, with whom he had long lived in habits of intimacy, made him feel his preſent ſituation with deep concern. He knew all his faults, but he ſtill knew his many good qualities.

The former had been thoſe of a generous temper, which, to his knowledge, had frequently left him without a ſhilling. To fortify the heart againſt the encroachments of one of her faireſt virtues, Beauclaire well knew to be the buſineſs of a friend. But young ſocial companions are ſeldom diſpoſed either to give or receive inſtruction, and as Beauclaire could not enforce precept by example, he did not feel himſelf qualified for the attempt.

For ſeveral days this unhappy ſufferer continued in the moſt alarming danger. Beauclaire and the Colonel called, and ſent frequently; and when Dr. R—— could give reaſonable hope of his patient, he did ſo with real ſatisfaction.

Dr.

Dr. R—— was a man of the moſt perfect Chriſtian charity, which, regardleſs of rank or condition, would be ſure to break out whenever his reaſon could catch a motive for employing it. But it would be doing the Doctor more juſtice, to ſay he never went in ſearch of a reaſon, having one always ready in his own breaſt for the relief of affliction.

By ſlow degrees Beaulieu recovered; and his friend, during the interval, procured him a commiſſion in his own regiment. A military life was the one beſt ſuited to his ſpirited character, and was what he had been originally intended for.

This act of Beauclaire, as an indubitable proof of his regard, contributed, in no ſmall degree, to a perfect re-eſtabliſhment of his health. Mrs. Beaulieu at this period arrived in town, whoſe grateful feelings have been long ſince anticipated by the reader.

To ſee her ſon raiſed from ignominy and diſhonour, and reſtored to that reſpectable ſituation to which both his family

mily and education were entitled, were reflections very consoling to maternal affection. But our young hero felt more pride in acknowledging this happy turn of fortune to a full conviction of his errors, than to the dignity and importance of his ancestors.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVIII.

MR. Paradox, our former acquaintance, was juſt preſented with a daughter-in-law, one of Mr. Simon's free choice. Having long ſince renounced all pretenſions to his fair couſin, he ſet out alone in queſt of adventures, and, in one of his excurſions, met with a Miſs Pandora Friſky, a Lapland beauty, lately brought over by a Scotch Baronet, who made a journey to this diſtant part of the globe with a view to tame the bears of the country; but this endeavour not ſucceeding, he directed his attention to a more laudable purſuit, and undertook to convert the females to Chriſtianity.—— For though many religious ſeminaries had been inſtituted, in Lapland, by the King

of Denmark, the inhabitants could not be ſaid to have profited much by his pious intentions.

When the Baronet acquainted Mr. Paradox with his ſon's attachment, he made no objection; for as he knew that in the marriage of the Laplanders the children are not conſulted, he wiſely concluded that he ſhould have the beſt of the bargain; the expences of her journey having been already defrayed, and her dowry the Baronet repeatedly aſſured him to be very conſiderable.

The lady was not introduced until every preliminary had been ſettled, though Simon had been long indulged with a tête-à-tête in the Baronet's ſtore room, where Pandora, with a female companion, were kept with other curioſities, free from vulgar inſpection.

When Mr. Paradox was preſented, he felt not a little diſappointed in her perſon; but reflecting on her dowry, thought her, on a ſecond view, by no means uncomely, and, before he left her, was decidedly of opinion

opinion that ſhe did not fall ſhort of ſome of the moſt celebrated beauties in our own country. The exultation he felt at the proſpect of ſuch an alliance induced him to renew his viſits at Colonel Raymond's, who had expreſſed himſelf with ſo little deference, on a former occaſion, to his ſon's merits.

The Colonel congratulated him on his deſcription of the lady; and her fortune, exclaimed Paradox, is immenſe!—Articles were ſigned, &c. &c. by the two parties, and the fortune was to be paid on the following day.

Mr. Paradox, highly gratified in the ſucceſs of his ſcheme, deſired to be called at an early hour, in order to be prepared for his friend's reception. Seven being the hour fixed at the Baronet's requeſt, the whole family were thrown into no ſmall confuſion and hurry from the variety of things to be got ready at ſo unreaſonable an hour; but all was in ſtatu quo, according to appointment, when covered waggons, to the number of twenty, drove

up in a line to Mr. Paradox's door. Surpriſed at this ſingular appearance, in ſuch a part of London as Albemarle Street, he rang the bell with great impatience, ordering his ſervant to bid the waggoners move off, and not block up the ſtreet with carriages that had no place there. The ſervant returned with a note from the Baronet, ſignifying the amount of Miſs Friſky's fortune. It conſiſted of rein deer, which, in all marriage contracts among the Laplanders, is the lady's portion; but the Baronet generouſly added a noble preſent of furs and ſkins of wolves, hyenas, otters, beavers, and foxes, of various colours; all of which were in high preſervation, and the rein deer, alive and merry, exceeded two hundred: the note concluded, by aſſuring Mr. Paradox, that, of all tame animals, they required the leaſt ſupport, while they procured the greateſt advantage to the owner.

Rage and diſappointment nearly deprived Paradox of the little underſtanding with which Heaven had bleſſed him. He haſtened

haſtened into the ſtreet, and after haranguing the drivers a conſiderable time, he, with great vehemence, forbad them remaining another moment before his door, but to go back with the whole inſtantly, and acquaint their maſter that the engagement was entirely broken. The manner in which the order and meſſage was delivered, added to the hilarity and joyous diſpoſition of the drivers, who, all, in one voice, vociferated they would not budge an inch, collected a numerous body of people; who, on being informed what theſe machines contained, eagerly deſired a peep. The inhabitants, not a little revived by the ſmell of freſh air, advanced towards the door, which the drivers obſerving, gave them a lift, when off they went full ſpeed, (their natural pace), to the no ſmall diverſion, fear, and aſtoniſhment of every one they met for ſeveral miles. Twelve were all that Paradox recovered. The bride, however, did not recede from her agreement; but after the nuptial ceremony had united her in honourable wedlock to the young heir,

they proceeded to implore the bleſſing and protection of their parents.

The Baronet may be thought a humouriſt by this trait of his ingenuity. It is, no doubt, a ſtriking feature; but, indeed, he had no one but what was tolerably conſpicuous. Early in life, that is about the age of forty, he ſet out upon a walk into Egypt, in order to trace the riſe and fall of the Nile, when a violent attack of the gout ſtopped him ſhort before he had travelled twenty miles.

At the time he became acquainted with Paradox he had juſt married a fourth wife, but the ſettlements were a conſiderable time delayed, in conſequence of a requeſt with which he found ſome difficulty in complying. This was, extraordinary as it may appear, not the leſs a fact, and generally known in the circle of the Baronet's northern acquaintance.—Now, what can the reader ſuppoſe it?—No other than to bury his three former, who had been embalmed according to the Egyptian cuſtom, and depoſited under his bed in cabinets,

binets, rather than coffins, with glaſs fronts, placed in regular rotation. The lady's importunities on this ſubject were ſo urgent, that the bridegroom conſented upon conditions that ſhe would allow him to viſit them whenever he ſhould be ſo inclined.

The Paradox family retired upon this event into Cornwall. Simon was well ſatisfied with his wife's accompliſhments, having no other view in his matrimonial plan than to get rid of parental control, to which his iraſcible temper did not ſo readily yield as in earlier days. His object was now effectually accompliſhed, and he purſued, without loſs of time, what his genius alone qualified him to enjoy, ſuch as cock fighting, boxing, and the like. In domeſtic life his taſte for punning and potatoe pudding employed no ſmall portion of his time, having a voracious appetite for both, which he ſaw no reaſon for checking; ſuch innocent relaxations and paſtimes were ſure to be met with at Paradox Hall. Country ſports he affected to

be fond of; but never having mounted a horſe till ſome months after his marriage, his dexterity in this exerciſe was not at par with the above-mentioned accompliſhments: after ſome broken bones, and numerous bumps and bruiſes, he had recourſe to a pillion for more ſecurity, which afforded poſſibly as much diverſion to the fox hunters as the chaſe itſelf. But Simon having long purſued his father's favourite maxim of acting by the pure impulſe of nature, ſo very prolific were his fancy and ingenuity, that the country derived no ſmall advantage from the ſucceſs, or diſappointment of his ſpeculations.

To trouble the reader with reflections upon what is called a genius, ſuch as the above, would be little to the purpoſe.—The fond parent, who takes delight in ſuch exuberant faculties, will find his own Simon as charming as ever; and the philoſopher, who has no ſuch luxuriances

to

to prune, has happily escaped the danger of similar productions.

We will, therefore, take our leave of the Paradox family, wishing them every possible felicity in their own way.

THE LAST CHAPTER.

PREPARATIONS were now making for the nuptials of our four friends, when a ſhort interruption unluckily happened; which, from pure good breeding, was admitted by Lord Beauclaire and Miſs Mordaunt, in compliment to their friend Lady Hartley. It is to be remembered, that when the Major ſignified his penchant for matrimony, ſome doubts aroſe in her Ladyſhip's mind as to his bachelor principles, which he thus explained to her full ſatisfaction; and poſſibly the ſubject would have dropped here, had not the ſettlement been part of the ceremony. But when the Major was to produce his rent roll, it ſo happened that all his property, both live and dead ſtock, was already diſpoſed of. Here her Ladyſhip wiſely made a long pauſe, and

and the Major was wholly at a loſs how to begin the next ſentence. His friend Colonel Raymond felt every inclination to help him on; but what idea to ſtart he knew not, being entirely out of the ſecret.—However, as the meeting of this party was in order to adjuſt every neceſſary preliminary, a repetition of the text could not be avoided, which being made by Lady Hartley with a ſtrong emphaſis, the Major felt it incumbent on him to give it the comment thereby implied. He made many attempts at a literal conſtruction, which would not do, for the ſenſe was incomplete, and the hearers ſtill in the dark. He then tried his ſucceſs at metaphor, when her Ladyſhip obſerved, with an inquiring ſmile, that as all matters of buſineſs required clearneſs and method, would it not be more to the purpoſe to come immediately to the point?—and, taking up the rent roll, with the will annexed, deſired the following clauſe to be explained: "And the yearly value of ſuch and ſuch eſtates to be deducted for the uſe of Miſs

A——, as pin money, with the reverſion of all my poſſeſſions real and perſonal after my natural life."

Here the Major took a pinch of ſnuff, which, in like caſes, has been found no unfavourable auxiliary, and aſſured her Ladyſhip, at the time this arrangement was made, the ſubject to which ſhe adverted was perfectly orthodox: but her Ladyſhip was wholly at a loſs to imagine how bachelor pin money could be entitled to that diſtinction—that a friendly conſideration of paſt merits and ſervices was but fair; but beyond that, what no one, however tender his conſcience, or ſtrict his morality, would take upon him to defend. The Major, with high deference to her Ladyſhip's ſentiments, begged to obſerve that when peace of mind had been ſacrificed, and character expoſed, to the calumny and defamation of a mercileſs world, it was but a bare act of juſtice to redreſs ſuch misfortunes by a comfortable maintenance. The epithet was admitted. The Major then proceeded, highly extolling the

the virtues of the party in queſtion, and that delicate ſenſe of honour and female decorum, which, for the laſt ten years, had been inviolably preſerved. The Colonel ſmiled, and her Ladyſhip looking a little arch, requeſted an impartial definition of female decorum in a bachelor's ménage.

"Why, Madam, ſuch things are!"

"As how, Major?"

"Why, Madam, when a lady repoſes her honour to the care and protection of a friend, and, regardleſs of eſtabliſhed forms, devotes her youth and innocence to his ſocial comforts, can there be, Madam, a more flattering proof of affection, or a ſtronger claim to eſteem?——Yes, eſteem!"

"If you mean a joke, Major, or in what you have advanced, for the ſake of argument, I will concur; but if you are really ſerious in maintaining opinions, againſt which every rational principle muſt revolt, allow me to ſay, we cannot cloſe the ſubject too ſoon. I am far from being rigid

rigid or uncharitable in my judgement of this unfortunate part of my ſex, and, as far as ſilent pity and commiſeration can throw a veil over their miſconduct, I truſt and hope they will ever meet with it from me: but contend not for that virtue which boldly defies eſtabliſhed cuſtoms, infringes upon the general maxims of life, and violates every principle for which the female character can alone be reſpected. Paſſion and intereſt are ſurely no laudable motives, be the purſuit what it may; but as the guide and director of feminine manners in every poſſible degree reprehenſible.—The mind muſt long ſince have loſt ſight of the reſpect due to itſelf before it can be indifferent to that of others; but ignominy and diſhonour are reflections to which it can never yield, while the ſmalleſt portion of integrity remains.—Put the queſtion home; will the decorum you ſo warmly contend for, and the virtue you ſo highly applaud, counterbalance other conſiderations, and induce you to make ſuch a woman your wife?"

The

The Major replied, "The queſtion was barely fair."

"I beg your pardon, it is bringing your argument to the proof. If, as a ſocial companion, you prefer her to any other, why deny her this open teſtimony of your eſteem, and a reſponſible ſituation in the eyes of the world?"

The Major was ſilent.

"I am then to underſtand, (continued Lady Hartley), that you relinquiſh part of your argument, and that eſteem is—not eſteem—nor love—affection—but a paſſion to which you are all equally dupes as long as it remains; but here its influence ceaſes, for when you look out for a more durable attachment, you do not find the ſame object will ſupply it, and that confidence is a neceſſary requiſite to eſteem, which in illicit connections cannot exiſt."

Here the Colonel, to ſave his friend from a verbal recantation, aſſured Lady Hartley that no more was meant than what

is

is commonly underſtood in ſimilar caſes. A decent maintenance was then immediately ſettled upon the lady in queſtion, and every thing generous and noble on the part of Lady Hartley was not omitted.

We are heartily ſorry to leave Mr. Sydney to the ſolitary enjoyment of his own reflections; but when we take a retroſpect of his character, we cannot be ſurpriſed, that, with a heart and diſpoſition ſo formed as his, ſociety ſhould have loſt its principal attraction.

The various avocations in which his ingenious mind had been formally engaged, ceaſed at the ſame time to afford him either ſatisfaction or amuſement; and all his philoſophy and honourable principles were barely a counterpoiſe againſt the acuteneſs of his feelings. Variety of deſerving objects ſtill remained among the large circle of his acquaintance; but no one reſembled Elvira; ſhe ſtood unrivalled. —— Then would fond remembrance break through the ſtill and ſolemn melancholy, and

and her image, with all its ſoft attractions and bewitching grace, ſo dwelt on his bewildered fancy, that thought ſeemed realiſed, till the phantom gradually ſtole away, and ſadly convinced him the whole was but a dream. Oft, in his happieſt moments, (if happy they could be called), would every comparative excellence raiſe her ſo infinitely beyond her ſex, that the endeavours and wiſhes of his friends for ſome new connection were little likely to prevail.

The good Colonel was poſſibly the moſt ſanguine on this ſubject; but Sydney would reply, "No, my friend, it is not poſſible—to a ſingle life am I eternally rivetted.... For ſeveral virtues have I liked ſeveral women; never any but her with ſuch full ſoul, but ſome defect in her did quarrel with the nobleſt grace ſhe had, and put it to the foil."

Still advice was adminiſtered, which, in moſt caſes where it has to combat with inclination, or to oppoſe a favourite purſuit,

ſuit, generally proves ineffectual, and eſtabliſhes a prejudice, which, if left to its own influence, might gradually have worn away.

Rochefoucoult ſays, "In the adverſity and ſorrows of our beſt friends, we find ſomething that does not diſpleaſe us."—Does Sydney's preſent ſituation confirm that obſervation?—Surely not; and where ever ſuch a maxim can be confirmed by practical knowledge, it can only be enjoyed by him whoſe heart has been long ſince dead to every generous ſentiment—being founded on a ſuppoſition that the diſtreſſes of others furniſh the beſt opportunity for exerting our own philoſophy. But I am diſpoſed to think, that, however we may admire and reſpect the man who bears his misfortunes with becoming dignity, yet that proſperity is the only touchſtone of virtue, and poſſibly the very condition of life in which the great and noble qualities are more immediately diſtinguiſhed, and ſupply the beſt examples for imitation.

A few

A few days previous to the marriage, Mr. Sydney ſat out for Vienna.

Shallow, who had been long hovering about Berkeley Square, and endeavouring to glide through a friendly avenue, began to think his time and talents miſemployed, and, in order to divert an ennui rapidly increaſing, ſat ſeriouſly down to ſtudy the claſſics, preparatory to the compoſition of ſome hiſtorical and poetical works, which he intended as ſpecimens of the ſimple and ſublime, in thoſe different ſpecies of writing which did not appear to him ſufficiently elucidated by Bolingbroke and Milton. He admitted the manlineſs and energy of Bolingbroke's ſtile; but his Patriot King he thought defective, and ſome animadverſions on the poet's deſcription of the ſolar ſyſtem were indiſpenſibly requiſite. The ſigns of the Zodiac, riggling in blank verſe, took away from the dignity of the ſubject; and, in ſhort, many other deſcriptions equally exceptionable, determined

mined him on making a new verſion of Paradiſe Loſt.

We ſhall therefore take our laſt farewel of him for the preſent, at his ſtudy door, and return to our more intereſting friends.

Punctual to the moment the whole party aſſembled in Berkeley Square at nine o'clock. Elvira was handed into the breakfaſt parlour by the Colonel, whoſe joy upon this, as upon every former, occaſion was expreſſed by his looks; and he and Mrs. Raymond, taking an affectionate embrace of their lovely young friend, preſented her, as their laſt and beſt gift, to the ardent and impatient Beauclaire.—What he felt, Elvira's veil prevented my ſeeing; and the Colonel haſtening her into the carriage, the ſame being obſerved by Major D'Arcy, &c. &c. with the Earl and Mr. H. They drove inſtantly to St. George's Church, where the two marriages were ſolemnized. This ceremony over, Lord Beauclaire, at his Lady's requeſt, ſet

ſet out with her a tête-à-tête party to their country ſeat.

A wedding dinner was prepared at the Colonel's for the Major and Lady Hartley, &c. &c. where the fervent wiſhes of every one preſent, for the happineſs and eternal felicity of the abſent amiable pair, were teſtified by the warmeſt demonſtrations of friendſhip and heartfelt ſincerity.

THE END.

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